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[UNCLE AND NEPHEW.]

THE SNAPT LINK.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Tarcy's Child," "Sybil's Inheritance," "Evelyn's Plot," &c., &c.

CHAPTER I.

These shall the fiery passions tear;
The vultures of the mind,
Disdainful anger, pallid fear,
And shame that lurks behind.

THE Honourable Eldred Mugrave, master of Brierfield Hall, of Rose Mount, and an annual rental of some 6,000*l.* per annum, with a satisfactory position in his native county of Shropshire, and a sufficient number of friends and acquaintances to enliven the somewhat monotonous routine of a rural life, might well be supposed to be as exempt from the ills and dangers of life as any frail mortal could desire.

Yet as he sat in his luxurious dining-room, sipping his well-seasoned port, and indolently cracking some stray walnuts that still remained on his plate after the dessert was presumed to be concluded, his brow was knit in deeper furrows than often contract the features of less-fortunate denizens of this weary and changeful world.

There was the sound of young voices, there was an occasional sweet, woman's melody in a neighbouring drawing-room, and light laughter broke on the pre-occupied man's ear, when the door opened from time to time for egress or ingress of coffee and lights.

Still, as he listened, his features grew darker still. "Yes, he is there," he muttered. "I suppose he has come back sooner than was expected, or wished," he added, angrily. "He is an incubus—an old man of the sea on my plans and wishes. I hate him, and I believe he knows it, though he smiles so blandly, and bears all my snubbing with despicable patience."

Even as he spoke these scarcely audible words the door opened slowly, and a young man walked, with a kind of half-apologetic embarrassment, into the room.

He was plain—so the first glance at his countenance would indicate. The somewhat singular features, the pale, sallow complexion, and melancholy expression of the dark eyes, presented little attraction either for the other sex or for the younger portion of his own.

Still the brow was noble in its breadth, the eyes had a whole world of thought and firmness in their grave depths, and his mouth could relax into a smile of rare sweetness and bright gaiety.

But that smile was as seldom seen as its charm was uncommon, and Rupert De Vere's usual expression was one of almost morose gloom.

"So you have returned, Rupert, I see," said the uncle, just touching his nephew's offered hand with cold carelessness. "I did not understand you were coming back so soon."

"Nor did I, sir, expect to complete my business so quickly; but Lord Wyndham was, as it happened, in town and gave me an immediate interview," returned Rupert.

"Well, and what was the result? But I may judge from the very facility with which it was granted. Of course there were smooth promises and no performance," said Mr. Mugrave, with a sneer.

"Pardon me, uncle; the promise is a definite one, and the prospect far brighter than I dared have hoped. I am to receive the next appointment as private secretary to the Treasury, with a salary of eight hundred per annum. I have a distinct promise, and it will not be more than three months before the changes, now in contemplation, are made."

"So much the better, if it is true," returned Mr. Mugrave, coldly. "I have had sufficient trouble and expense with you already, Rupert, and it is high time for you to prove yourself worthy of the care and money I have bestowed on my step-sister's son."

He poured out another bumper of port as he spoke and drank it off, without even indicating by any sign an invitation to his nephew to follow his example.

Rupert remained standing on the hearthrug in moody silence for a few minutes—then he suddenly started from his abstraction as a gay, silvery laugh

rang like a flute melody through the open door of the drawing-room.

Mr. Mugrave marked the lighting up of his dark eyes, and his own thin lips formed into a cynical smile.

"I suppose Aubrey is there; Hilda is seldom so gay except in his presence. They are well suited to each other," he said, with a covert glance at his nephew.

Rupert sprang a few steps nearer to the table where his uncle sat, as if galvanised.

"Am I to understand that Aubrey Lestrangle and my cousin are engaged?"

"To which cousin do you allude?" asked Mr. Mugrave. "You have two relatives of the opposite sex here, Rupert. My daughter, Hilda, and my niece, Gertrude Lindsay."

"I need scarcely explain my meaning, uncle; you are not so dull or blind as to ignore the truth. Till now I have crushed it down in my breast, I have abstained from even betraying it to her, whom I would have given years of my life to win! But now that I can offer her a home, when brighter prospects are opening before me, I may, with honour, yield to my heart's promptings. Uncle, will you give her to me if I can gain her love?"

"I am no Sphinx, and no frantic young quill-driver, whose business it is to solve problems. Will you deign to be more explicit, Rupert? I hope I do not understand your words as they might seem to tend. Is it for Gertrude's hand you are pleading in such very needlessly strong language?"

Rupert's hand clenched a small porcelain ornament he had unconsciously taken from the mantelpiece till it crumbled to fragments in his strong grasp, and a small stream of blood oozed down his wrist from the fretting wound its sharp edges inflicted on his palm.

"Uncle, this is a cruel jest; you must know the truth—you must know that from boyhood my whole soul has been occupied by Hilda. Fair and gifted as she is, at least my birth is equal to hers, and one day my fortune may be at least worthy of

her. Uncle, will you give me your sanction for my bold suit?"

If looks could have withered with a lightning blast, the object of that dark, fiendish glance would have been transfixed for ever in death's rigid clasp.

Mr. Mugrave's face literally whitened with a fiendish malignity that seemed reserved for his hated nephew alone, since no other of his dependents had ever encountered such deep, concentrated passion from his most irritable moods.

"Insolent pauper, son of a detested parent, this is past endurance!" he gasped, in accents literally choked with the breathless rage which succeeded to his icy sneers. "Retract your words, say that you have but uttered a foolish and impudent jest, and I will try to forgive your presumption. If it is Gertrude whom you ask of me, I will consider my reply. She may perhaps think herself fortunate in having any suitor at all."

A terrible gust of passion swept over the young man's face. Not such as had brought that black, demon glance to his uncle's saturnine features, but, like a gush of flaming blood which would fire the brain and heat every pulse to madness.

"Uncle," he said, hoarsely, "there is a kindred between us that should shield your gray hairs, but it should also save me from such sore trial at your hands. Take care, I entreat, I adjure you, not to outstep my patience. Brother of my mother, son of my grandsire, remember that the same high spirit and hot blood run in my veins as if I were the possessor of our ancestral acres. Uncle, why am I to be marked out for insult and outrage at your hands?"

Even Eldred Mugrave's bitter soul somewhat quailed beneath the concentrated indignation of that lofty nature.

"This is all very fine talking, Rupert, and sounds remarkably heroic and poetical, but it will not do in real life. Let us just consider matters in a practical light. Sit down a moment. It is quite as effectual as that sort of tragedy attitude, and I will humour you so far as to argue this unlucky business calmly. You ask for Hilda's hand. Now, in the first place, I have no reason whatever to suppose she cares the value of this hazel nut for you, and, in the next, if she were so extremely silly, what a remarkable idiot I should be to permit such a sacrifice. She is young, beautiful, brilliant, and heiress of all my available wealth. Have the kindness to look in yonder glass, and ask what possible remunerative qualities you have in return for so gifted a bride."

Rupert did not quail under the sarcasm.

"I will tell you, Mr. Mugrave, what I have to offer. I have an unstained name, ancient lineage, a true and honourable heart, and an intellect which will win fame and fortune in due time, perhaps even greater than your heir's can command. Do not sneer, uncle, I am no vain boaster. I judge myself as I would another man, and I know that I speak sober truth."

"Now for another picture before I give my final answer," said Mr. Mugrave, his very hands clenched in the effort to suppress his passion for a more crushing crisis. "As you are so just a portrait painter, give me a sketch of Aubrey Lestrangle."

Rupert's lips curled in intense and biting scorn as he replied:

"It is soon done. A smooth, glittering, gliding, tortuous snake, with the venom concealed and the embrace death."

Mr. Mugrave laughed a hollow, contemptuous laugh.

"It is astonishing to what lengths impotent and hopeless envy can carry a disappointed pretender. Luckily your venom at any rate is not concealed, and I appreciate the wretched animus as it deserves. But," he added, with sudden fierceness, "I have have restrained myself too long, and placed an iron veil over my real feelings. Now it is time to throw off the mask. You have cast down the gauntlet, and there shall be open war instead of a hollow peace between us. I have hated you from your early boyhood; you have been an intruder in the world where you had no place, you have been a dependent on the bounty of others, an intruder on their home and family. To complete the catalogue of your offences, you dare to lift a presumptuous eye to my own fair, high-born, stainless child!—you, a base-born and penniless pauper!"

Rupert raised a knife from the table, while a terrible pallor overspread his features. It was one of a silver dessert set, but still it was able to deal deathly wounds when hurled as his uplifted hand threatened.

Mr. Mugrave involuntarily crouched down in his chair, and his limbs seemed chained to the seat by sudden terror.

It was cast down, that small missile, and with such violence that it was literally jammed into the polished dining-table, but not near the owner of all that splendour, not in threatening attempt on his life.

Rupert had mastered the terrible temptation, and

the knife was lodged close to the spot where he stood, as if in a vent to his boiling, passionate feelings.

"Say that again, or rather retract those infamous words, brother of my mother!" he said, passionately, "lest I do indeed forget that it has been said, 'Thou shalt do no murder,' lest I bring the curse of Cain on my brow!"

"I certainly shall not be daunted by any more such lunatic bursts," replied Mr. Mugrave, coldly. "I did not intend that you should ever know the disgraceful truth, but since you dare the revelation I shall give it you in a few words: unless you behave like a rational being, you will be expelled, not only from this room but the house, by my menial servants."

The gentleman placed himself near to the bell as he spoke, and signed Rupert to a chair on the other side of the fireplace, perfectly clear from any weapon of offence.

"Boy," he continued, "you call me 'your mother's brother,' but you are in error. I never had a sister. Your mother was the daughter of my father's brother, but not in lawful wedlock. In compassion to both her and to his brother's memory, she was adopted as a tiny child of some two years old on her parent's death, and when my own father died, long ere she was out of childhood, I continued to her the shelter and the care of a brother. But the curse was on her. She made a hasty and clandestine elopement with a young officer ere she was seventeen. He was reported killed in foreign service, and the shock tended to increase the usual danger of childbirth. Her eyes closed as yours saw the light. Now you have the truth, and my long-tried patience with the living reproach to our name is utterly exhausted by the insolent audacity you have displayed. Bastard and would-be murderer, you are a fitting suitor indeed for my peerless child!"

There was a triumphant smile on Eldred Mugrave's face as he gazed on the unhappy orphan on whom he was pouring such phials of disgrace and misery. But, to his surprise, Rupert rather expressed defiance than humiliation.

"This is a remarkable story, Mr. Mugrave, to be told so late in the day," he returned, bitterly. "It will need some proof ere I can fully credit it."

"That can be easily given. You may search in vain for any register of the birth of a female in my father's family. Indeed, my mother died a very few months after my younger brother's birth, in whose stead the infant Maria was brought into our house. If you doubt it, ask any of the old servants of the Mugraves who were alone in the secret! Ask the ancient nurse, Elspeth Barnes! Ask Roger Beattie, the favourite attendant of my father, and they cannot but confirm my words! For your mother's sake and your own, I would advise you not to bruit the long-concealed truth. As I have now done my duty to the very utmost, I need no longer put violence on my natural feelings. From the time you leave this house the shelter of my roof is closed against you for ever."

Rupert's eyes were fixed with burning penetration on his taunting relative's face, but he could discern no trace of falsehood in its stern, unflinching hate.

"Do not fear, sir," he said, bitterly; "I shall never ask a readmission here, nor shall I trouble your hospitality save for a few brief weeks. I demand but one simple justice at your hands. Let me see Hilda, and alone—may, do not drive me too far," he added, fiercely, as he caught Mr. Mugrave's contemptuous look; "I will see her, either by your permission or my own efforts. I shall ask nothing from her save pardon and sympathy and kindly remembrance. If it be as you say, if she does love that popinjay, you cannot fear that she will show me aught save scant kindness."

"Will you pledge yourself never to trouble me more after your interview with my daughter? never to ask any farther favours at my hands?" asked Eldred Mugrave, after a moment's deliberation. "I would not desire to see your face more for the remainder of my life," he added, bitterly.

"Be content, you never shall till one of us is on the eve of death," replied Rupert, with an outburst for which he could scarcely account. "We could not both live in amity after this deadly injury."

"Hullo! why, what the deuce is all this grand tragedy style, old fellow?" said the gay voice of a singularly handsome young man, entering the room with a light carelessness that strangely contrasted with the moutonous topics of that angry dialogue. "Miss Mugrave has sent me to fetch you to the piano. She wants you to take a third in some trio with her and her cousin. I must say music will have an opportunity of exercising its power to soothe the 'savage breast,' eh, De Vere?"

Rupert's lips opened in an angry negative. Then his mood seemed to change, and he turned hastily to the door with a defiant glance at Mr. Mugrave.

"Excuse my leaving you. I shall see you again before bed time," he said, with bitter courtesy; then strode with hasty steps from the room.

"You ought to have been alive two centuries since, my good fellow," said Aubrey, tauntingly, as they crossed the hall. "Your style is too heavy now, except for a stage villain or an injured hero, rather than an English gentleman of birth and breeding. Perhaps the romantic Gertrude likes that kind of thing in her slave, eh, De Vere?"

Rupert did not appear to listen, but only Heaven and his own heart knew the fearful effort it cost to keep down the foaming torrent that scalded his very breast and fired his whole blood.

"For to-night, only to-night, and for her," he said, inwardly.

When he entered the drawing-room only the eyes of one of its inmates guessed that his pulses were thrilling with shame and misery under that enforced calm.

"Come, Rupert, faithless truant, don't you know we settled to sing that delicious trio from 'Don Giovanni' for Mr. Lestrangle? Tea has been waiting till it must be like iced water. What in the world have you and papa been talking about to keep you so long?" was the gay reproach that awaited him on his entrance.

"Oh, nothing, only he was, as usual, kindly interested in my proceedings," said Rupert, calmly. "You forget I have been away, Hilda."

"Oh, dear, no. We have wanted you several times, have we not, Gertrude? There are so many things one needs partners for, and three is so stupid a number. But there, make haste, or we shall not finish before papa comes in. Begin, Gertrude!"

The girl thus addressed was seated at the piano, her singularly beautiful hands playing idly with the keys, and her head slightly bent, after her first quick glance at Rupert when he entered.

Perhaps she shunned comparison with the dazzling blonde beauty of her fair cousin, which would indeed have eclipsed many a more lovely and faultless face than Gertrude Mugrave could boast. Yet there was a hidden loveliness in her magnificent eyes and lashes, in her pale, cream-tinted skin, and her expressive mouth, that many an artist would have selected for a model of a Madonna.

She obeyed the rather imperious mandate of her cousin, and began the very intricate symphony to the trio in question with a firm, light touch and mastery of the instrument that spoke of rare musical talent. But though her rich low voice was indeed the very sustenance and guide for Hilda's brilliant soprano tones, it was lost on her companions.

Both the young men were engrossed by the witchery of that gay and beautiful girl, both deemed every accent angel's melody, both envied the other the privilege of drinking in the sweet, bright tones that seemed to ring like a silver bell in their ears.

"There, have we improved since you heard our first miserable essay?" asked Hilda, archly, turning to Aubrey as they finished.

"You must always surpass others; now perhaps you surpass yourself," he replied, in a low tone. "The only reason I ever grudge your singing," he added, drawing her from the instrument towards the tea-table, "is that I want your whole looks and words myself. I am a very miser where you are concerned, fair Hilda."

"And I certainly shall not encourage such bad habits," she replied, archly. "Are you not afraid I should imitate them, and grow very sparing of the wonderful treasures you pretend to value so highly?"

"Then I must in self-defence feast my eyes if not my ears," he returned, "and put you out of countenance by my daring rudeness. Ah! do you know I am sadly jealous of your rival?" he whispered, glancing at Rupert, who was standing gloomily occupied with a pile of music, of which he did not in truth discern one note. "Hilda, you will silence all such presumption, will you not? It makes my blood boil to think that one so obscurely born should share my feelings respecting my heart's fair goddess."

"Hush, hush! you forget he is my cousin!" she said. "Besides, he has always been brought up with Gertrude and me like a brother. Surely you need fear no rival now, need you, Aubrey?"

The last word was uttered with a kind of arch shyness that gave it an additional charm, but still it did not altogether banish her lover's disquiet.

"You forget, in your turn, that your father insists on our engagement being kept secret till you are eighteen, and that for some three months I must submit to this probation. How am I to know what may happen in that interval, my beloved? Either you or your father might change or I—"

He stopped abruptly, and she finished the sentence. "Or you may change—is that what you would say, Aubrey? You know full well that papa never alters when his mind is made up; you must indeed offend him most desperately for him to withdraw his consent—gamble, or bet, or some such dreadful thing; but that you never could be guilty of. Dear Aubrey, for my sake, you would not make papa angry, and he

has such a terrible horror of what he calls 'minor vices.' I fancy he must have suffered himself from some one who did such wicked things, for—"

But her sentence was interrupted by the sudden approach of her cousin Gertrude.

"Mr. Lestrangle, will you come and try this dust?" she said, quietly. "Pardon my interrupting you, Hilda," she added, meaningly, "but perhaps you forget that all are not so engrossed as yourselves, and it is not always safe to converse in full saloon."

Aubrey's face cleared up amazingly at what might have been supposed to be a somewhat unwelcome request, and he smilingly offered his arm to Gertrude to lead her back to the piano, just as her uncle entered the room.

A look of annoyed surprise came over Mr. Mugrave's face at the unexpected grouping he witnessed, and he spoke to his niece with even more than his usual harsh indifference.

"I am sorry to interrupt such a rare opportunity for display on your part, Gertrude, but I must beg you to excuse Mr. Lestrangle; I want to speak a word to him, and I believe he is unfortunately obliged to leave us to-night; is it not so, Aubrey?"

"Yes; it is but a passing glimpse of Paradise this evening," said Aubrey, lightly. "I have a positive engagement early in the morning which obliges me to return to the Larches. But to-morrow, Mr. Mugrave, if you will allow me, I will ride over again, and remain over the hunt ball."

"Of course, of course; you are always welcome; still I should like to have one word with you to-night; I shall sleep more quietly when it is off my mind," he said, with a rather constrained laugh. "Hilda, will you write those notes meanwhile?" he added. "I shall despatch them before you are up in the morning. And you have *curtis blanché*, remember, on this occasion. I choose my helress to be properly brought out at her first ball."

He left the room, accompanied by Aubrey as he spoke.

Hilda vanished with nervous haste, as if afraid to trust herself with her cousins, and Rupert and Gertrude were alone.

For a brief space there was motionless silence; Rupert was gloomily gazing on vacancy, and Gertrude's splendid eyes were furtively reading his features.

At length she timidly approached him, and laid her hand on his arm, with a sweet, pleading look that gave a momentary and bewitching beauty to her mobile face.

"Rupert, what is it?" she said. "Surely you should be happy at your success."

He turned fiercely round.

"Oh, do you mean to taunt me also, Gertrude? I suppose I ought to be very grateful for bread and cheese being secured to me—poor, despised, outcast! As if I had not human feelings!—as if there were not tortures far worse than poverty or obscurity!"

"What are those, what are these new sufferings?" she asked, with averted eyes.

"What you, perhaps, with your cold nature, can scarcely comprehend," he returned, fiercely; "the tortures of jealousy and hopeless love. Do you suppose I am a stone or an idiot, Gertrude?"

"Then it is so: you love Hilda?" she whispered, in almost an inaudible whisper.

"Did you doubt it? could you dream of anything else?" he said, fiercely. "As if any man could live near one so angelic without worshipping her. Is it really news to your innocent unconsciousness, Gertrude?" he added, bitterly.

"I feared it; but still we had all been like brother and sisters from childhood, and you never breathed such feelings," she replied, with a sharp look of pain in her wan features.

"Did you really suppose there was no difference in my affection for you and my idolatry of her?" he said. "Would that it were possible to persuade myself that all this fierce agony is but imaginary, or that I could look upon her beauty, and see that fair angel smiling on the presumptuous suit of another without thirsting, burning for revenge! Gertrude, you cannot understand such passions, but I tell you I would rather look on Hilda in her coffin than standing at the altar with that smooth reptile!"

"Hush, hush, Rupert! Do not speak such fearful words!—they might be registered against you were they overheard," she said, deprecatingly.

"Oh, I care little; I presume you would not betray me, Gertrude, though I can trust no one now," he said, fiercely. "It is true indeed that 'a man's foes are of his own blood,' and that 'a mine is prepared by the treachery of one's nearest kindred.' Gertrude, this very night I have heard that which has made me well-nigh desperate, careless of my own life or that of others!"

"Do you mean about Hilda?" she said, in a low tone.

"Yes, about her, and other darker deeds still," he

said, gloomily. "Gertrude, tell me, can you imagine, even in the faintest degree, my bitter anger and hatred against those who have snatched from me every hope on earth? What would you do in such a case? Would you not feel, as I do, that no penalty would be too great for revenge? Would you not think any misery lighter than witnessing the triumph and the happiness of a hated rival—the bliss of Paradise while suffering the torments of Tantalus?"

The words came hissing from between his clenched teeth, and Gertrude shivered beneath their chilling breath.

"Better suffer and be patient; better win the nobler prize, the higher happiness of self-victory," she said. "Rupert, there are other objects in life for a man than even love. Will you not try to forget this early blight in more glorious fields of ambition?"

"That proves how little you understand me," he said, sorrowfully. "It is only deep love that can comprehend what the passion can be. More ordinarily calm natures, like yours, easily get over, if they ever feel, such instincts. I should not have expected sympathy from you, Gertrude!"

"You have it, from my heart," she said, sadly; "but what can I do? how can I comfort you, Rupert?"

"I want nothing from you; I require no comfort because none can be given to me," he said. "You cannot give me Hilda's love; you cannot even restore to me the poor honours and happiness of a brief hour since; and your cold reasonings, your heartless counsel, rather irritate than soothe me. If you had loved yourself—that is, loved like me—there might be more sympathy between us. But you have milk and water in your veins; I have blood—fierce blood!—even if it is dishonoured!" he murmured in his teeth, so that even Gertrude's straining ears did not catch the word.

Her hands were tightly clasped, twice her lips moved to speak and again pressed together, as if to restrain the words, and a scarlet flood flamed up in her cheeks which belied Rupert's taunt.

"Perhaps you are right," she said, "but yet I would do much, very much for you. I would willingly bear your suffering for you, Rupert. And I pray you from my very heart to control this rebellious despair. There may be happiness, and fame, and wealth for you yet, if you will but wait with patience."

"But not love, not love!—and all is valueless without it," he returned. "If I were in a palace and were to see that hated viper with Hilda in his arms as his rightful prize, I would feel as if I were in the dungeons of the Inquisition, racked with tortures to which beggary itself were bliss! No; I could weep calmly over her coffin, but not endure her loss!"

Gertrude sighed—a long, heart-rending heaving of the overburdened breast.

But Rupert, if he heeded it at all, scarcely would have guessed the true cause of that suppressed groan. There was too deep a misery in his own spirit to permit room for such speculation on another's love.

"Gertrude, I must see, speak with her. It is a last poor consolation. She shall not be without warning and knowledge; only I trust she will not say that she loves him—will not scorn me for my devotion to her happiness. I feel it would drive me mad; I could not answer for myself!"

"Has papa not come back yet? What a terribly long conference he and Aubrey are having," said Hilda's sweet, gay voice, coming into the room with her gracefully folded billets in her hand. "I really must go and see what they are about."

Before either of her cousins could stop her she had bounded gaily from the room.

"You see, you see," said Rupert, gloomily. "It is folly, madness, ruin. It must—it shall not be!"

He strode gloomily from the apartment.

Gertrude sank down on a low fanteuil near the place where she stood, and crouched like a stricken deer, who shrinks from its death pangs being watched by strangers' eyes.

"Not know—not understand," she said. "Oh, mercy, mercy! As if my very heart was not torn and bleeding for myself as well as for him. Oh, why is she to have all, all—love, wealth, beauty, parents, home—while I am crushed and have nothing but desolation! Would it be wonderful if I were to hate her?—that petted child of fortune—if I were to rejoice over the misery that may be in store for her? He—he can see no fault in her; he worships her light and superficial nature; he guesses not the deeper chords that vibrate in my own soul. Hilda, Hilda, you are not worthy of the love you have won!"

CHAPTER II.

Various and strange was the long-winded tale Of merry swains who quaff the nut-brown ale And sing enamoured of the nut-brown maid.

THERE was an ill-concealed uneasiness in Aubrey Lestrangle's look as he seated himself opposite to Mr.

Mugrave in the identical chair that had been occupied by Rupert de Vere a short time before.

Yet one would have imagined there could be no cause for alarm or distrust in the accepted lover of Hilda Mugrave in the presence of her approving parent; and Mr. Mugrave did not even appear to notice the nervous gesture and constrained attitude of his chosen son-in-law.

"I requested your presence for a few minutes, Aubrey, to announce to you what I trust will be a welcome alteration in my intentions with respect to your marriage with my daughter. Circumstances of a very unlooked-for nature have induced me to hasten the time I had fixed for the wedding, and under certain provisos I have determined it shall take place in two months from this time instead of six. That will give ample time for preparation on your side and on hers, more especially as I have before conditioned that you will reside here for half the year, and receive me for part, at any rate, of the remaining six months."

"You will ever be a most welcome and honoured guest, my dear sir," rejoined Aubrey, enthusiastically. "This gracious trust and consideration bind me to you more closely than ever. It was indeed an endless prospect to look forward to; now it is bearable, especially in the occupation it will produce."

"Stay one moment, my young friend," said Mr. Mugrave as Aubrey was about to start up from his chair. "I have still one important condition to make ere you run away with your new hopes. Ere I give you Hilda and the fortune that will be hers, first at the marriage and afterwards at my death, I must be satisfied that I am trusting her and her wealth in no unsafe custody. I know that your income is by no means equal to my own, though one day it must necessarily exceed it in amount when you succeed to your great-uncle's title and estates. Still, if that is free and clear, with no burden either of mortgage or debt on its security, I am content to accept it as it stands. If it had been injured by one imprudence on your part—by gambling or betting in any shape whatever—I could never pardon the vice—never believe in its cure. Once you expressed to me your detestation of it. Excuse a father's anxiety when I say that I shall require full proof of your complete freedom from such dangerous escapades."

"For Hilda's sake I can pardon everything," said Aubrey, with an air of injured but gentle pride. "Still, I had supposed that your acceptance of my suit was sufficient guarantee for your confidence in my character and position."

"Of course, of course it was. But can you not imagine the natural alarm which such an irrevocable step may create in a father's heart? There are floating and idle rumours that are disregarded as they pass by the mere listener to detested gossip, but they leave a vague impression, like a stain on the mind, which is too faint to be remarked without scrutiny."

"Then I have been belied—maligned to you, sir? Surely I ought to know the name of my slanderer!" said Aubrey, fiercely.

"No; scarcely that, Aubrey. It was so light and passing and half-jesting a remark that I could scarcely even determine the exact source to which it could be traced. Do not look so distressed, I do not attach the slightest credence to the rumour. I merely ask—what is no doubt most easy to grant—a full and complete inquiry into the state of your affairs, which will abundantly disprove any faint uneasiness on my mind. There is a sad family reason for my anxiety in this matter which I need not enter into," he added, gravely. "It is sufficient that I feel I have the right to secure my child from the consequences of even inopportune and trifling excess in this respect in her future husband."

"Who can feel that better than her devoted lover, my good sir?" said the young man, softly. "All is open for your examination, and I do not fear the result. Only," he added, with a deprecating air, "I may at least stipulate that you, and you alone, will thus search into my private affairs and conduct. I could scarcely brook the prying curiosity of strangers."

"You are right, perfectly right, my dear boy," replied Mr. Mugrave, as if relieved by the frank concession. "After all it is no such very formidable ordeal I propose, only a security that you have no encumbrances, no proof of past imprudence to destroy my confidence in you for the future. Now I need not detain you if you really must leave us to-night. It is getting rather late for the long ride to the Larches."

As he spoke the door opened and Hilda's lovely face peeped into the room.

"Papa, I have finished my notes; are you ready to look at them?" she said, without venturing to advance.

"Yes. Come in, my child; Aubrey is just going off, and can bid you good night here. I want to speak

with you afterwards, then I shall dismiss you for the night, as I have a great many papers to look over in readiness for Walton to-morrow. Good night, Aubrey. We shall see you to-morrow, before dinner." "May I bring a friend with me?" he asked as he shook hands with his future father-in-law. "He is an old school and college friend of mine, and perfectly suitable for a guest at Rose Mount, one of the oldest untitled families in all England, and a rising man at the bar."

"Certainly, certainly; any friend of yours will be welcome," returned Mr. Muggrave, heartily. "What's his name, Aubrey?"

"Dacre—Philip Dacre," he returned. "I feel sure you will like him though," he added, with a smile at Hilda. "He is not outwardly attractive enough perhaps for me to fear introducing him here. Au revoir, my dear sir. Hilda, dearest, adieu!"

With a hasty embrace, which Mr. Muggrave was considerate enough to sanction by leaving the lovers alone for a moment while he summoned a domestic, Aubrey Lestrangle departed.

The moon was struggling through the clouds, and there was little fear of any danger from the closing in of the dark night. But still Aubrey was evidently in desperate anxiety to get to the Larches in the shortest possible time.

He put spurs to his high-bred horse, though he certainly little needed the goad, and galloped along the familiar road with an impetuous recklessness that spoke ill for the condition of his mind or body or both.

As the moonbeams gradually struggled into full power they fell on a dark and troubled face all unlike the bland and joyous features which Hilda Muggrave believed the most bewitching that ever won maiden's heart. The groom who came hastily forward as the horse's feet clattered up the hard gravel carriage drive to the house cynically shrugged his shoulders as his master threw him the reins without vouchsafing a word.

"Humph, the fiend is in him again," he muttered, "as poor Negro can tell. Why, there's not a dry thread in the animal's coat. Well, he's a queer un, is my young master, as I could tell if I liked, but it don't suit my book to meddle in other folk's matters, and, what's more, I was born in the family, as I may say, and I won't spoil the market of the heir. Come along, Negro."

He led the panting animal to his stable. Meanwhile Aubrey had sprung up the steps, and, passing the servant who held open the door, hastily crossed the hall and threw open a lighted apartment, where a blazing fire and well-covered table looked cheery after his cold night ride. It was not empty moreover.

A gentleman was lounging in a well-padded easy-chair by the fire, a book in his hand, or rather reposing on his knee, for by the sudden start, and the involuntary rubbing of his eyes at Aubrey's abrupt entrance, it might be somewhat fairly opined that he had been indulging in a comfortable doze.

"Ha, Lestrangle, come at last! I was getting most ravenously hungry, and too polite to begin my supper without my host. But I suppose you could not tear yourself away from your lady love. Well, I daresay I may take the infection some day all the stronger for being rather late in the day. But I am here at twenty-eight, and never yet even spoony on any girl."

Aubrey looked at him, with a slight elevation of his brows which the rather remarkable plainness of the speaker could well justify at such an assurance.

Philip Dacre certainly looked forty, rather than the eight-and-twenty years to which he correctly enough laid claim; his firmly set figure, full whiskers, and maturely lined features gave him a strangely middle-aged air which deprived him of the great charm he ever could have boasted—youth.

"You're quite as lucky, perhaps, not to burn your fingers, Dacre," returned Aubrey, gloomily. "There, give me a bumper of wine, will you? I've ridden till I'm regularly winded!"

Philip poured out a brimming glass from one of the richly cut decanters on the table, and, handing it to Aubrey, followed his example.

"It's a bad thing to drink before eating, old fellow," he said, coolly setting down his glass; "but there are exceptions to every rule, and we are both seedy enough to exceed the bounds; though, why on earth you came back from the charming Hilda with such a saturnine face passes my comprehension. My state of collapse is easily to be accounted for—I've no love to feed on in ambrosial cups, eh, Aubrey?"

"Don't be foolish, Dacre; I tell you I'm more ready to cut my own throat, or some one else's, than to stand idiotic chaff. I am in an awful fix, and unless you can help me out of it I see nothing for it but murder or suicide, or both."

"Doesn't pay, my dear fellow, except for those whose business it is to report such senseless proceedings," returned Philip, coolly; "but, instead of such desperate measures, suppose we use our knives in a

more legitimate and useful style. I am a great deal too famishing to talk, or even think in any rational manner. An empty stomach sends the fumes up to the brain and bewilders the clearest intellect; and," he added, more seriously, seeing Aubrey's gesture of indignant impatience, "in sober earnest, Lestrangle, you are not in a state to converse to any purpose any more than myself. There, cheer up, old fellow, it must be a perplexing fix that can't be got out of by a lawyer's brain and your own somewhat elastic notions of right and wrong; and, if there's a loophole big enough for a midget to get through, we'll manage to drag you out."

He coolly rang the bell as he spoke, and drew his chair to the table, while Aubrey reluctantly followed his example.

The servant soon appeared with some smoking dishes, in addition to the already amply supplied board and sparkling ale, as a precursor to the lighter and more stimulating drinks which awaited the young men on the conclusion of their meal.

Philip did ample justice to the good cheer set before him, and even Aubrey gradually succumbed to the force of example and an exquisite cuisine.

Nor was it till the well-discussed meal had been despatched, and cigars and spirits had taken its place, that the lawyer drew his chair near to his host's and quietly remarked:

"Now, old fellow, let's have it. What's in the wind?"

(To be continued.)

PROPOSED NEW GERMAN COINAGE.

THE coinage proposed by the German Emperor to the Reichsrath accomplishes what we suppose were the main aims of its framers. It introduces a gold standard into Germany, where, on account of the growth of the country, that standard, the only one suitable to large payments, was much required, and it extends a system of coinage and accounting nearly akin to that of Prussia all over the German Empire.

But here its main merits seem to end, for in all other respects it is evidently and greatly defective. It is proposed to coin the following gold coins:—A 30-mark piece, equal to 11. 9s. 4½d.; a 20-mark piece, equal to 19s. 7d.; a 15-mark piece, equal to 14s. 8½d.; and the silver coin is to be a mark of 11½d., divided into copper pieces, thus—10 groschen, one mark; 10 pfennigs, one groschen.

Upon which proposal it is natural to make the following remarks:—

First.—That it is nothing more or less than a new international vexation. At present the principal coinages of Europe contain several coins all but equal to the English sovereign yet not equal to it. The International Coinage Commissioners gave this list of such coins:—The Spanish doubloon, or piece of 10 escudos, contains of fine gold 116·487 grains; the half-eagle, 116·100; the sovereign, 113·001; and the new coin of the value of 25 francs would contain 112·008.

Much thought and much discussion have been spent on trying to get rid of these little differences, and to have one and the same coin in all countries, instead of so many nearly equal. For most purposes, and especially those of exchange and account, if one coin differs from another, it hardly matters how much it differs. You never can in important transactions or calculations treat it as the same; and the sums required to adjust little differences are often as complicated as those required to adjust great ones. For a long time it has seemed a vexation to be kept by such petty differences from the great advantage of a European coin. But this vexation is nothing to what we have now. Germany is now asked to establish a new gold coin—a 19s. 7d. coin—not really equal to the sovereign or any of the old approximations to it. It does not correspond with the 25-franc piece, or with anything else. It is simply a new difficulty in international coinage; an unhappy addition to the semi-equivalents which for years have baffled and beaten us.

Secondly.—It is a singular feature in this proposal that though it introduces gold coins into the currency it finds no place for them in its system of account. That system is, as it should be, decimal. The mark of 11½d. is divided into 10 groschen, and each of those groschen into 10 pfennigs; but when we reckon upwards from the mark we do not find in the decimal system any of the proposed three coins. Neither a 20-mark piece, nor a 15-mark piece, nor a 30 come into the system of reckoning. It is as if in our system there were no sovereign, but only a 25-shilling piece, or 30-shilling piece. To make the system of gold coin tally with the mode of reckoning there ought to be a 10-mark piece.

Thirdly.—There is no good unit of reckoning in this system. The mark of 11½d. is obviously too small, and even 10 marks or 9s. 9½d., is not large enough. Even the sovereign, though we find it works

well, has sometimes been thought to be small for large sums, such as large commerce and large finance deal with, and a half-sovereign is plainly too small. One hundred marks, or nearly 5½l., is as obviously too large. And not to have a gold coin which is a good unit of reckoning for large sums is to lose the characteristic advantage of a gold currency. A silver currency could not provide a coin suitable for a unit of high reckonings; such a coin in silver would be too big and cumbersome for use. But a gold currency can do so; and when a nation is making a new gold currency it is stupid not to make one with a single gold piece fit to be a unit of reckoning, and Germany especially will want a large unit, because her transactions are already so very large, and are growing to be so immense.

Fourthly.—For the present, at least, this system establishes a double standard of gold and silver. It settles a tariff of rates at which the old silver coins of the German Confederation are to be exchangeable for the new ones.

Thirty marks are to be equal to 10 thalers, to 17 florins 30 kreutzers, and so on. Nor could this duplicity of standard be easily avoided during a time of transition. But, if you submit to the evil of having this double standard and this tariff of currencies, you ought to gain what would now be of great use in Germany—the facility of using French coin. The tariff should be augmented so as to include it.

The payment of the indemnity will naturally flood Germany with foreign coin; and though generally it is a source of confusion to fix the value of foreign coins, yet when the currency is already so confused as that of Germany now, the added complication may well be risked for a great convenience.

For these reasons the scheme for the new German currency is exceedingly disappointing. It may pass, because in Germany is now the influence of the Berlin Government is overpowering.

But it cannot be popular in the non-Prussian parts of Germany; it must be unpopular in Alsace and Lorraine and all the provinces bordering on France, as the inhabitants will have constant and intricate calculations between the familiar French money and the new German money; and it would not pass in a country which was thoroughly habituated to free discussion, and where the preponderance of argument determined the policy of the State.

THE GRAVE OF COLONEL CATHCART.—In the course of the works necessary for laying the telegraph cable from Anjer Point to Sumatra the coffin of Lieutenant-Colonel the Hon. Charles Allen Cathcart, M.P., who died June 10, 1878, aged twenty-nine years, was discovered at a considerable distance below the surface. We have since been favoured with the following particulars of the life of this gallant officer, which will be read with melancholy interest:—Colonel the Hon. Charles Allen Cathcart, the second son of the great lord, and great-uncle to the present Lord Cathcart, was born in the year 1759, and died at the early age of twenty-nine years. Even at this early age he had distinguished himself as a soldier, as a senator, and as a diplomatist. Joining the army in America in 1776 he was taken prisoner on his return by a French privateer. Subsequently, as lieutenant-colonel of the 98th Regiment, and in more important commands in the East Indies, he saw much military service; he was also present during many naval battles with the French. Employed diplomatically, he conducted important negotiations with the French Governor of Bourbon, the Marquis de Souillac. In command of the storming party at Cuddalore, Charles Cathcart carried all the French redoubts, capturing eighteen guns; sent to England with despatches, he was, for his services, appointed quartermaster-general in India; the Court of Directors voted him a sword of honour, value 100 guineas. At the general election of 1784 Clackmannanshire sent him to Parliament, where he at once established an honourable position. Mr. Pitt, in 1788, with a view to commercial interests, sent him with full powers on an embassy to China. On the outward voyage he died, on board the "Vestal" frigate, then in the Straits of Sunda. This was on the 10th of June, 1788. He was buried on the adjoining coast of Java. The scene is depicted by the artist of the expedition:—In the background a chief and groups of natives; nearer the shore, marines and seamen drawn up on either side; a central group of mourners, gentlemen of the embassy and naval officers—one faints, many weep; the coffin, under the white ensign, is being landed through the surf, whilst in the offing the distant frigate fires minute-guns. To express their grief and record their affection for the deceased officer, his companions placed a monument in the Dutch fort of Anjer. The skillful pencil of Romney renders Charles Cathcart's image still familiar—his memory is fresh and cherished. "A dutiful Briton's grave is hallowed ground."



[MAUD'S LEAP.]

THE CHARMED RUBIES.

CHAPTER I.

If eyes were made for seeing,
Then beauty is its own excuse for being.
Ralph Waldo Emerson.

MAUD MONTRESSOR sat her horse like a queen that morning, and a queen she was, in truth, by virtue of her proud blood, her royal nature, and, most of all, her rare and wondrous beauty. A perfect woman in every sense of the word—a glorious brunette, warm, bright, and dazzling, with a form like Hebe's own, and a haughty, clear-cut face, lighted by great night-black eyes, that could blind you with their lightnings or bewitch or bewilder you with their melting tenderness. A perfect woman, and a lavish one too; dainty as a pink in her tastes yet carelessly extravagant, for her sweeping riding-robe was of heavy green velvet, and the gleaming spur on her tiny boot, even the very stirrup at her saddle, glittered with gold and precious gems.

And the horse was just a match for her—indeed, a kind of high fellowship seemed to exist between the two, making them half akin. He was a superb creature, showing his fine blood in every movement of his lithe limbs, with an eye of fire, and a coat of glossy black, that glittered like satin in the morning sunlight.

He stood there, proudly enough, beneath his beauteous burden, arching his fine neck, and champing at his bit with a suppressed restiveness that threatened every moment to break out into actual rebellion. Maud herself was impatient, too—one could see it in every motion of her perfect form, in the half-angry tapping of her little foot against the jewelled stirrup, and in the quick, expectant glances she cast down the winding lane which swept up from the sea-shore towards Montressor Park.

"Worthless gallants, both of them, Selim," she said, at last, bending over and caressing her black steed's neck, "to keep a lady waiting thus. One moment more, and we'll take the road without them."

But while she spoke a swift clatter of hoofs resounded down the lane, and a horseman dashed in sight, riding at a furious pace. Maud gave him one quick glance with her black, eagle-like eyes—saw that his great gray hunter was covered with foam and dust, and panting from fatigue; then, with a malicious smile on her red lips, she touched her golden spur to Selim's glossy flank and gave him the reins. He went off like an arrow from a bow. The approaching horseman ground his spurs into his reeking

horse, and gave utterance to an exclamation. Then, rising in his stirrups, "Mistress Maud," he shouted, "wait—stop—just one instant—don't desert me thus."

Maud turned in her saddle, and laughed, a clear, resonant laugh, full of silvery ripples—then: "We meet at Hansbury Ford," she called back; "don't be a laggard, Sir Harry."

And Selim flew on. The young man followed, with a white, wrathful face, his gray hunter making giant leaps in spite of his fatigue; yet only managing to keep in sight of the long, green trail of the lady's velvet robe and the graceful sweep of her black plumes.

The October morn was glorious beyond description—all the giant trees about Montressor Park tawny with autumnal gold, and the great sea and white-capped chalk hills looming up in the distance through a haze of purple mist; and, over all, a blue sky and a bright sun.

Maud felt the subtle influence of the morning as she flew on through the keen, frosty air. A rich crimson flushed her cheeks, and an unwonted splendour lit her dark eyes, as the skimming motion of her horse, and the wild freedom of her daring gallop, filled her young heart with a kind of glad delirium. On and on she flew, utterly reckless of consequences or appearances, and the great gray hunter, straining every muscle, thundered after her.

The highway led through a rich and picturesque country, straight down to Hansbury Ford, at which place there was to be a gay and gallant meeting that morning. Some score or two of young lords and ladies, and old ones too, indeed, for that matter, had planned to start out from this rendezvous on a great fox chase. Sir Ralph Porter, the master sportsman of the county, had unhoused his entire kennel for the occasion, and expectation was on tiptoe.

Lovers of the sport were all aglow with excitement; and none more so than beautiful Maud Montressor, who, with all her high breeding and feminine fastidiousness, enjoyed a good gallop, with the hounds ahead of her in full cry, as much as any woman, or man perhaps, in England. We must not think any the less of our young heroine because of this somewhat masculine passion, for the morning upon which our story opens was fully a hundred years ago, and in those days the fairest dames thought it nothing amiss to indulge in such amusements.

Maud was a beauty and a belle, and, moreover, an heiress in the bargain, the sole inheritor, at her father's death, of one of the finest estates and noblest old mansions in England. Montressor Park was noted far and wide for the picturesque grandeur of its grim old towers, the fertile beauty of its surround-

ings, also for the genial hospitality of its lordly master. Sir Felix Montressor kept the finest horses in his stables, and dispensed the oldest and costliest wines at his table, of any man in the vicinity; no wonder, then, that his grand halls overflowed with guests, or that his handsome daughter counted her scores of lovers.

Maud was the central star of the brilliant galaxy in which she moved—courted, petted, and worshipped like a very queen. There were at least a dozen young nobles ready to send a bullet to each other's hearts for love of her; and all the while the haughty young beauty was as icy and indifferent as the Polar Star.

When it became known that she intended to ride with the hunters from Hansbury Ford, two of her numerous admirers, being the most ardent and determined, perhaps, gained admission to her presence and begged for the honour of being her escort. Maud listened to both with equal patience, but favoured neither. But, after a while, when they waxed hot in their importunities, and refused to be denied, she smiled her own dazzling smile, and answered thus:

"I shall mount Selim at eight by the tower clock—first come, first served."

She had been as good as her word, but just as the last resonant clang of the iron tongue died away on the frosty air, sitting there, in her queenly impatience, on her black steed, she descried the youngest and handsomest of all her lovers—Sir Harry Gaylord—beating up the lane on his great gray hunter. At first her heart leaped, and she felt glad that he had got the better of his rival, Guy Livingstone, for he was a fine fellow, handsome and accomplished, and heir to an earldom besides. A good match for the best girl in the country, her old father said; and Maud herself may have thought as much—yet, seeing the poor fellow's plight and evident anxiety as he urged his weary horse on towards the park, a spirit of mischief possessed her, and she dashed off, as we have seen, at the top of her speed.

Once on the road, with the great gray hunter thundering after her, her blood was aroused, and she determined to run all risks rather than be overtaken. She would ride to Hansbury Ford alone, and, once there, put herself under the charge of gallant old Sir Ralph Porter, thus outwitting both of her ardent suitors. The idea pleased her excessively, and, with a beaming smile on her flushed face, she flew on through the crisp October air, leaving poor Sir Harry and his gray hunter still farther and farther behind.

But just in the very moment of her triumph, when success seemed sure, an unlooked-for impediment arose before her. Coming down upon the river-side crossing, a sudden clatter of hoofs broke upon her

ear, and all in an instant, before she had time to breathe or speak, a roan mare, with dripping sides and distended nostrils, plunged across her way, bearing Guy Livingstone in her saddle. Selim stood still, and Maud uttered a little cry of surprise.

"What, Mistress Maud, on the road already?" the rider began, his swarthy cheek flushing with pleasure at this unexpected encounter. "I left Dover Hall before six, and have galloped every foot of the way. You failed in your promise."

"No, sir," Maud responded, haughtily, gathering up her reins. "I never break my word. I left the park at eight by the tower clock. Let me pass, please."

"No, by Heaven!" replied the young man, excitedly, catching at her bridle as the gray hunter came in sight. "Here comes Gaylord now, but I'm ahead of him, and I claim the right of being your escort, Mistress Maud."

"No, sir, you forfeited that right by failing to be punctual. Let me pass. Selim, we will go!"

The black steed made a forward movement, but young Livingstone caught at the bit, causing him to make a violent plunge, and at that instant the gray hunter came up.

"Unhand the lady," cried Sir Harry, growing purple with anger. "Would you force her favours from her? Mistress Maud, I was in sight of Montessor Park when you rode away. I claim to be your escort."

Maud glanced from one eager face to the other, and made an instantaneous resolve.

"You both failed me," she said, "and now he shall be my escort who can."

As the words left her lips she touched the little golden spur to Selim's flank, and he shot off like a bird.

Sir Harry rose in his stirrups, his face white, and his features working with intense excitement.

"Mistress Maud," he shouted, "it shall be as you say. He shall win who can—not only for to-day, but for all time. Isn't it so?"

Maud turned in her saddle, nodding her head, and raising her little gloved hand in acquiescence.

For a single breath of time the two men looked into each other's faces, with fierce, defiant eyes, then they plunged forward, riding side by side.

On and on, over leagues of fertile farming land, past grand old mansions, and pleasant parks and pleasure grounds, down to Hansbury Ford. Still the two horses ran abreast.

Maud looked back once, and saw them fast gaining upon her with a feeling of wild terror at her heart. What mad folly had she committed? In her silly excitement and love of adventure she had been betrayed into a net from which there seemed no chance of escape. One of these men would certainly overtake her, then what should she do? Break an implied promise or become his wife?

At the thought another face and form arose before her as she flew on—a vigorous, masculine face, with strong Celtic features, and strange, impenetrable eyes—a face that she saw but seldom, but it was one which haunted her night and day. Her very soul sickened, and, regretting her foolish folly, she resolved to die rather than be overtaken.

Seating herself more firmly in the saddle, she glanced back again. Slowly but surely the great gray hunter was gaining headway, and the bonny roan mare, lithe and vigorous as she had been at the outset, was lagging behind.

Guy Livingstone's dark face became almost terrible in its pain and passion; he plunged his spurs into the mare, vociferating madly at every breath, but Sir Harry only gave his gallant hunter the reins, and, seeing Maud glance back, he rose in his stirrups, and, doffing his cap, saluted her with a triumphant cheer.

The poor girl grew faint, and the brilliant colour left her cheeks as the heavy thuds of the hunter's feet came nearer and nearer behind her.

"I must escape this—oh! I must, I must!" she moaned, bending over and caressing her flying steed as if he were a human being. "Oh! Selim—brave horse—save me—save your poor mistress from a fate worse than death."

The horse, seeming to comprehend her piteous appeal, uttered a low whinny, and shot forward with redoubled speed, his eyes flaming, the fire blazing in continuous sparks from the pebbles beneath his feet.

Sir Harry followed on his panting hunter, and the roan mare came on behind. Almost within sight of Hansbury Ford, the road forked, diverging right and left.

"To the right, Mistress Maud, to the right," shouted Sir Harry.

But either not hearing or not heeding his advice, Maud flew on, into the left fork, and down upon Deep Run, instead of Hansbury Ford. The young man followed, his cheeks growing white with fear.

"Good Heaven!" he exclaimed as the dark, swift-flowing stream came in sight, its wide banks torn and crumbling from recent rains. "Surely she will

not be mad enough to make that leap? 'Twould be instant destruction."

Then, rising in his stirrups, he shouted again with all his might:

"Mistress Maud, I say—you are on the wrong track—don't try that leap—turn to the right."

But, heedless of his words, the girl flew madly on, down the steep, precipitous road to the very brink of the yawning, muddy stream.

In the meantime, Sir Harry, in his terrible excitement, had reined in his gray hunter, thus giving advantage to the roan mare, and almost before he was aware of it he found her at his side.

"Stop, for Heaven's sake!" he cried, catching at the bridle, "don't urge the poor girl to her death—don't you see she's mad? Rein in your horse, Guy Livingstone!"

But the young man laughed him to scorn.

"I'll win her, or die in the attempt," he replied, his dark face growing hot with passion as he plunged his spurs into the mare's sides.

She bounded forward like a deer, and Sir Harry, seeing himself about to be outdone, urged on the gray hunter.

Casting back one last, despairing glance, Maud saw them bearing down upon her side by side; and, with athen cheeks, but firm and fearless eyes, she turned to the yawning chasm before her.

It was a fearful leap, but her gallant steed had borne her through many a danger, and she determined to trust her life to his prowess rather than accept a fate to which death itself was preferable. He did not falter or exhibit any signs of trepidation as they bore down like lightning upon the rugged banks; and, with an unspoken prayer in her heart, Maud grasped her reins tightly, and, whispering, "Now, Selim!" vaulted over.

The brave, black horse made the leap grandly, clearing the yawning ditch at one great bound; but the opposite brink crumbled and gave way beneath his feet, hurling him down into the deep current.

Struggling for life, he arose and made a desperate plunge, gaining a firm foothold at last, but throwing his young mistress as he did so a full half-dozen yards ahead of him on the hard, crisp ground.

Harry Gaylord and Guy Livingstone reached the opposite side of Deep Run in one and the same instant, and both paused involuntarily as Maud and her black horse went over, rendered senseless and powerless for the moment by surprise and terror. But in the next breath they followed her example, for they were daring and desperate men.

Sir Harry, with a reckless impetuosity that characterized him, essayed the terrible leap, though fully conscious at the moment that it was beyond his horse's power; but his rival, ever thoughtful and alert, even in his wildest moments, urged his mare down the crumbling brink into the deep water. The poor hunter did his best, but fell in midstream, submerging both his master and himself; while the bonny mare, by dint of plunging and swimming, gained the shore.

Guy Livingstone leaped from his saddle with an exultant flash in his fierce eyes.

"Living or dead, I have won!" he exclaimed, dropping on his knees beside Maud's prostrate form.

But the words had barely escaped his lips when Sir Harry, bruised and dripping from his fall, but with unabated ardour, was at his side.

"No, sir!" he thundered, seizing his rival's arm, "there shall be no foul play—she would have been an honest league ahead of us both but for this unlucky mishap. Beware how you touch her hand," he continued, his gray eyes growing fierce and hot, as Livingstone took the little gloved hand in his own. "When the purest and proudest maiden in England lies unconscious at your feet haven't you manhood enough to respect her helplessness?"

Livingstone's swarthy cheeks flamed, but he answered, coolly:

"I won't resent your insolence, knowing how your failure galls you—she's mine now, pretty Mistress Maud; and naughty old Sir Felix will be glad enough to give his consent when he hears all about this mad frolic."

He stooped to raise her white, deathlike face to his shoulder, but, before Sir Harry had time to remonstrate or interfere, a third personage appeared upon the scene—a powerful, stalwart man, whose strange, grotesquely clad figure made a giant shadow in the bright October sunlight.

"Stand aside," he commanded, speaking in a voice deep and rich with some strong emotion, while his eyes glowed like those of an enraged lion, "stand aside; I shall protect Lady Montessor myself."

And, knowing by a kind of instinct that he was in the presence of his master, Guy Livingstone obeyed.

CHAPTER II.

The music in my heart I bore
Long after it was heard no more.

Wordsworth.

THIS new-comer was rather a singular personage to look upon. Tall and stalwart, as we have said, and powerfully built, with broad, brawny shoulders,

and lithe, muscular limbs, suggestive of immense animal strength, while his face, with its strong, sharply cut features, and deep, impenetrable eyes, gave unmistakable evidence of an equal amount of vigorous intellect and fiery passion. His garb, too, was rare and unique, and seemed to be part and parcel of the man himself. A green hunting-suit, edged and trimmed with scarlet, a heavy belt confining the waist, and holding in place a brace of richly mounted pistols; across his shoulder a tough yew bow, and a quiver filled with arrows, and on his head, half-concealing the curling locks of his dark hair, a queerly fashioned cap, ornamented with a short tuft of scarlet feathers and a single blazing jewel.

"Stand aside!" he said, emerging all at once from the thick covert of the woods; "I shall protect Lady Montessor myself!"

Guy Livingstone, hot-headed desperado as he was, rose to his feet and withdrew without a word, leaving the beautiful young heiress prostrate on the ground, while Sir Harry Gaylord stood immovable and speechless from utter amazement.

In the meantime, the strange giant of the forest, or whatever he was, proceeded to divest himself of his heavy bow and quiver, then, doffing his jewelled cap, he filled it with water, and, kneeling by Maud's side, dashed it lightly in her face, his bronzed features working with suppressed feeling as he watched for some sign of returning life.

But the beautiful, haughty face lay white and deathlike in the morning sunlight.

He put down his dripping cap, and, with a touch as full of tender reverence as a young mother might bestow on her first-born babe, he fastened the jewelled buttons at her wrists, and, withdrawing the gloves from her delicate hands, began to chafe them softly and gently.

Almost on the instant, as if the bare contact of his touch brought back the life to her stilled pulses, an electric shiver shot over her, a faint crimson dawned on lips and cheeks, and her eyelids quivering opened.

But she closed them again almost instantly, giving utterance to a faint moan. He continued to chafe the slender wrists and white, jewelled fingers, with slow, gentle touches, his bronzed face flushed, his firm mouth quivering like a woman's.

Guy Livingstone still stood apart, looking on with a wild, affrighted stare in his eyes, and all the colour dashed out of his swarthy face. If an apparition had arisen before him, he could not have looked more appalled. Sir Harry, amazed and anxious, irresolute whether to interfere or not, looked on in silence, while brave, black Selim, drenched and panting, stood by with an expression of human solicitude in his clear eyes.

Presently a shiver stirred the girl's prostrate form, and after a moment she opened her eyes, gazing round her with a wondering, bewildered stare. The stranger dropped her hands on the instant, and, bending over, whispered in her ear:

"Lady Montessor, you have been riding, and met with an accident. Shall I take you home to your father at Montessor Park?"

The deep, richly modulated voice seemed to thrill and startle the poor girl to the inmost core of her heart. She started up to a sitting posture, uttering a sharp cry, but, meeting the dark face, and the deep eyes that burned above her, she sank down again, burying her face in the folds of her velvet riding-robe, and giving way to an outburst of hysterical weeping.

"Oh, dear!" she moaned, piteously, "that you should be here; that you, of all the world, should know this."

Stung to madness by the evident power this strange man possessed over the woman he loved so truly, Sir Harry found it impossible to restrain himself any longer.

Approaching the spot, he said, addressing his unknown rival, and forcing himself to speak kindly and quietly:

"Don't you perceive, good sir, that the poor lady is not herself? Hadn't we better make an effort to get her back to the castle?"

The stranger was on his feet in an instant.

"Just what I wish to do, sir," he responded, quickly, looking up with a frank, genial smile that brightened his grand, gloomy face, as a rift of sunlight gilds the rugged summit of a granite boulder; "with your help, if you please. Oblige me by leading up your horse, and I think I can persuade her to remount."

Sir Harry was stung to the quick by what he termed the man's insolence, still he obeyed him; so did Maud Montessor, when, dropping on one knee beside her, he whispered a few words of entreaty in her ear.

Proud, imperial Maud, whose will was so absolute and dictatorial. Like a little child, with a vivid flash on her cheeks, and a timid meekness in her glorious eyes, she suffered him to assist her to her feet, and smoothe down her dishevelled robes; then he placed her in the saddle and adjusted her jewelled stirrup.

All the while no word passed between them; but this strange, stern man was master, by virtue of the strength and power of his irresistible will.

"This way, if you please," he said, quietly, making a motion with his hand, when they were ready to ride; "we shall find a better ford down the stream."

Maud, sitting erect and graceful again, and showing no traces of her mad adventure, save in a certain subdued humility of manner, which made her doubly charming, gathered up her reins from Selim's glossy neck, and commenced her return journey; and Sir Harry, mounting his gray hunter, rode along at her side, while their straggling guide walked a little ahead, his bow and quiver slung across his brawny shoulders, and the solitary jewel in his cap blazing like a star in the morning sunlight. Guy Livingstone gazed after them with savage fury in his black eyes, then, vaulting into his saddle and digging his spurs into the sides of his roan mare, he galloped off in the direction of Hansbury Ford, angry and revengeful.

The ride to Montessor Park was rather sober and silent, quite unlike Maud's mad gallop over the self-same road only an hour or so before. And the girl herself, sitting so quietly and gracefully in her saddle, her cheeks faintly flushed, and her downcast eyes tender with maidenly consciousness and timidity, seemed wholly a different being from the daring rider who had led her lovers such a wild race.

Sir Harry marked the change with a sharp pang at his heart and a fierce glance at the strange stalwart man who walked on before him. Who or what could he be who possessed such wonderful influence over this high-bred, haughty girl?

Curiosity got the better of good breeding with Sir Harry as he watched the swift blushes blooming and fading on Maud's cheeks at every glance his strange rival threw back, and, pressing his gray hunter close to Selim's side, he said, in a low whisper:

"Mistress Maud, you haven't been courteous. You should have made me acquainted with your friend. Who and what is he?"

Maud flushed scarlet, and drew herself up, pallid and haughty.

"My friend, as you say," she responded, coldly. "And his name?" urged the young man, flushing at his own impudence.

"Ask him," she answered, sharply, with curling lip and flashing eye.

Sir Harry was silenced, but not satisfied; and he resolved, in his heart, to keep a keen eye on this queer fellow, and to discover, if possible, the nature of the relations existing between him and Maud. The resolution made him thoughtful and moody, and they journeyed on in silence until the gray towers of Montessor Castle appeared in sight. At the great arched gateway leading into the extensive park the stranger paused and lifted his jewelled cap.

"Mistress Maud," he said, bowing low before her, "I must leave you to this young man's care now; for the present I will not intrude myself upon you, but I shall see you again ere long—until then farewell."

Before the blushing girl had fairly returned his greeting he disappeared amid the trees of the park, with a step as fleet and buoyant as the deer he started.

Maud gazed after him with a yearning, wistful expression in her eyes, sighed heavily, then, recollecting herself, turned with a vivid blush on her cheeks, and rode up to the castle gate, Sir Harry cantering soberly beside her. And thus ended the morning's mad adventure.

CHAPTER III.

In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
Bring sad thoughts to the mind. Wordsworth.

MAUD MONTRESSOR sat alone in her luxurious bed-chamber. The long evening was over at least, the guests gone, the lofty halls deserted, the lights put out.

She had dismissed her attendants, and sat there all alone, in the great velvet arm-chair, before the fitful fire that glowed and grew dim by turns on the marble hearth.

Her dainty night-robe of white cashmere hung in rich folds about her perfect form, just revealing the rounded arms and tiny, slipped feet; and her long, lustrous black hair, unbound and unconfined, trailed round her like a cloud.

But her face looked pale and careworn, as it rested against the violet lining of her chair, and her eyes had a wistful, far-away expression in place of their usual beaming brilliancy.

Her delicate hands, closely clasped, rested on her lap, and her whole air and attitude showed plainly enough that, beauty and heiress as she was, she had her perplexities, and her sorrows, too.

And this was her birthday anniversary. Her father, haughty old Sir Felix, had given a grand ball, the gayest and most expensive entertainment of the

season, in honour thereof, deeming nothing too costly for this "sole daughter of his house and heart," of whom he was so proud.

Only one hour ago, and this selfsame Maud, sitting there so silent and gloomy, was shining like a star amid the youth and beauty that filled her father's halls, robed in trailing satin, gleaming with costly gems, smiling, charming, irresistible, moving like a queen in the mazes of the dances, the courted, petted, capricious belle of the evening.

Now she sat there all alone—the costly robes put by, the blazing jewels torn from her hair, the mask of smiles dropped from her face—pondering it all over. The more she pondered the sadder and more anxious her young face grew.

The evening had been eventful as well as festive, to Maud at least. At its close, when her scores of ardent lovers were making their adieu, and portly dowagers and bejewelled maidens were bustling and chattering round her before taking their places in the carriages that awaited them without, standing in the great hall, smiling on this one and another, and playing the charming hostess to all, Maud, turning to speak to Sir Harry Gaylor, who stood on her right hand, while Guy Livingstone doggedly and persistently maintained a position on her left, caught sight of a face and figure framed for an instant in the great oaken doorway—a gloomy, sorrowful face, looking wistfully in upon all the brightness and gaiety; and on the instant her own blanched to the very hue of death, and her hands and voice shook and quivered so that her guests looked on in unfeigned wonder and inquiry. Her father, standing by, and watching every movement of his peerless daughter with vain pride, took in the whole scene with a single glance of his keen gray eyes, the brawny figure in the doorway, and his daughter's unwonted emotion. In a breath he was at her side.

"Close that door," he commanded, addressing an attendant; "the draught is chilling your young mistress." Then, turning to Maud, and drawing her hand through his arm, he added: "Maud, my dear, you are growing weary—let me assist you in bidding our good friends adieu."

Poor Maud could only acquiesce. The door closed, shutting out the lofty figure and gloomy, wistful face, and her father held her like a prisoner until the last guest had departed. Then he led her into the library, placed her on a sofa, and sat down in front of her—a haughty, stern old man, as relentless and pitiless as he was selfish and proud.

Maud, with all her imperial calmness, paled and trembled beneath the keen glance of his gray eyes.

"Maud Montessor," he began, speaking in cold, rasping tones, "until to-night I have regarded you as a superior being—but my star has fallen. You are like all the rest—merely a weak, silly woman. Hitherto I have trusted you—but, for the time to come, I shall govern you. You understand that, don't you? I've heard of a great many of your mad escapades. Your race down to Deep Run, for instance—a handsome piece of work, now, wasn't it? And who was your escort home? Who is it you're falling in love with, Maud?—the groom, or one of my gamekeepers?"

Maud grew scarlet with confusion, but her eyes blazed proudly, and she began an angry denial; but the old man silenced her.

"Not a word," he said, sternly; "I have heard enough, and from trustworthy sources too. You had some interloper at your side all the way home that morning—and to-night he had the audacity to force himself into the presence of my guests. I saw him—and I saw your blushes too. Pretty conduct, truly, for the proudest and wealthiest young woman in England! But I've found it out in time, thanks to my good friends—and the next thing is to put a stop to it. We'll have done with all madcap romance for the future, Mistress Maud. I've indulged and trusted you already to an unpardonable extent; my one object now shall be to guard my name from disgrace. All women are foolish when they once get into love, and you're in love, Maud—I can see it in your eyes. But, once for all, remember that you may as well tear the silly notion from your heart. I've had some half a dozen proposals for your hand within the last day or two. I have selected two, and I desire you to choose between them. I don't wish to be hard on you, Maud, and I've allowed you this liberty, instead of making the choice myself. You know them both—Livingstone and Sir Harry Gaylor—fine fellows—worthy of the best woman in the land. One week from to-night they are to have your answer—don't forget, now, I've given my word. If I were to make the choice, I'd take Gaylor—he's very wealthy—has rather the best blood—and is altogether a more attractive man. But, as I've said, you are to choose, not I."

Maud rose to her feet with aken cheeks and tottering steps.

"Oh, father!" she gasped, extending her hands in piteous entreaty. "I cannot—I cannot. Oh, for the love of Heaven, don't force me to marry

against my will. Let me live here with you in my old, happy home. I do not—cannot love either of these men."

"I daresay," broke in the old man, with a scornful laugh. "You love that strapping peasant who was here this evening. What a fine, dainty damsel to be sure. Go to your room, Maud! I'm ashamed of you, and, bear in mind, one week from this night will see you a betrothed bride. You know I mean what I say, Maud, and at present I'm doubly in earnest. Go—leave me—not another word!"

Maud obeyed, dragging herself up the broad, oaken stairs with slow, despairing steps. At the door of her dressing-room her waiting-woman met her.

"My lady," she said, with a low courtesy, "I have received three parcels for you to-night; these two," pointing them out as they lay on the dressing-table, "from Sir Harry Gaylor and Master Guy Livingstone, and this," touching a third package, heavier than the others, "from a strange man, who was loitering about the porter's lodge—a queer-looking fellow, my lady."

Maud glanced at the neatly folded packages with inquiring eyes; then, turning to her maid with well-assumed indifference:

"Put them aside, Cecil," she replied; "I'm too tired to attend to them to-night. I want to rest."

The girl obeyed with alacrity, removing and laying aside the gleaming satin robe, the costly lace, and flashing diamonds.

Once wrapped in her flowing cashmere, Maud threw herself into the violet depths of the great chair.

"You may leave me now, Cecil," she said, closing her eyes wearily. "I shall not need you again."

The girl lingered a moment or two, hoping to find some excuse for remaining, but her mistress dismissed her with an imperative wave of her hand, and she went reluctantly and somewhat sullenly, her woman's curiosity painfully excited.

No sooner had her retreating steps grown silent than up sprang Mistress Maud, alert and wide-awake, her cheeks all aglow, and her eyes gleaming with unwonted splendour.

After locking her chamber door she turned to the three parcels still lying on her dressing-table. She recognized the handwriting on two of them almost instantly; but the third, a bold, manly hand, was strange to her—she had never seen it before. Somehow the simple sight of it thrilled her strangely, making her cheeks burn and her hands tremble as she turned it over and over. It was a hard, heavy package, securely done up in cream-coloured satin paper.

Who could have sent it, and what did it contain? Her curiosity was all on fire, yet, yielding to a capricious impulse, she put this last parcel aside, and, seating herself, began slowly and patiently to examine the other two.

The first one was from Sir Harry Gaylor, and contained a scented missive, and a small mother-of-pearl casket.

Maud broke the crested seal, and read the straightforward, manly declaration, and, in spite of herself, she was touched and flattered. It was just like the man himself—sensible, true, and tender. He loved her and wanted her for his wife. But he did not care to face the keen humiliation that a refusal from her own lips would cost him, and he resorted to a little stratagem. He enclosed with the letter a trifling ornament; and, if her kind heart had any favour for his suit, he begged that she would wear it in her hair at the masked ball on that night week, and by that token he would recognize her and know that he was destined to be the happiest man on earth.

Maud refolded the missive, then unclasped the little casket; and there, on a bed of crimson down, was the purest, loveliest little blossom of a jewel that her eyes had ever beheld. A lily of the valley, formed of one great, lacid pearl, and set in broad leaves of emerald, with a single, lustrous diamond, glittering like a dewdrop, in its heart. She was fond of beautiful things, and her eyes lighted up with pleasure as she beheld it.

"What a dear, darling little thing!" she murmured, holding it up to the light; but the next instant an angry flush rose to her cheeks, and she tossed it disdainfully aside. "No; I'll have naught to do with him or his gifts," she said. "A tale-tale. He won his way to my father's favour by prating of my foolish adventure at Deep Run. He shall have his reward."

Pushing both letter and casket aside, she turned to the second package. The letter was characteristic of Guy Livingstone, impassioned, fiery, and full of appealing eloquence. Maud read it with tingling cheeks, and took up the offering that he had sent. An antique jewel-case, literally overflowing with diamonds—a complete set—necklace, armlets, brooch, and ear-rings, all of the purest water, and lustrous as Eastern moons.

"A princely gift," Maud murmured; "like the giver. Poor Guy! what a fiery fellow he is!"

She put them back with a little sigh, then, putting forth her hand, drew up the third and last package. Every vestige of colour left her cheeks as she unsealed it, and her bosom rose and fell with great swells of emotion.

A long, closely written letter, in the same bold, manly hand, and a case of solid gold, ornamented with an elaborate coat-of-arms.

Maud unfolded the letter with fluttering fingers, half-believing herself under the influence of some weird enchanter.

"Lady Montessor," it began, "I am about to commit an act that may appear in your eyes rash—even impertinent. But I am not a man that can endure suspense. I always like to know on what kind of footing I stand. We have not been friends long, and, if we are to become strangers again, the sooner the better for my peace of mind.

"You know all the circumstances of our first meeting, and remember them, no doubt; there is no need for me to recapitulate them. We have met but seldom, yet, Maud Montessor, I love you—not with any capricious or boyish fancy, but with the passion that no man ever knows but once in his lifetime.

"If you were mine, my wife, as I would have you be, I think I could make you as happy as ever the love of man can render woman; at any rate, it should be my endeavour to do so. But I am a stranger, you know nothing of my nature, even less of my name and antecedents. I am glad it is so. The woman who becomes my wife must love me for myself alone, and trust me on my simple word.

"Can you do this, Maud Montessor? I tell you that I am a man who has kept his soul aloof from all stain and dishonour. The manhood I offer you is pure and undefiled, the love I bear you as true and tender as that a mother feels for her first-born babe. Can you trust me, love me in return? But search your heart well before you make your decision; bear in mind that I am not a man to be trifled with; but if you are a true woman, as I take you to be, and can trust me and love me, wear the gift I send with this, at Lady Heathcote's masked ball, on next Thursday night, and that shall be your answer.

"This a priceless gift I send you, Lady Maud, priceless and precious. These rubies belonged to my mother, and the last act of her life was to put them in my hands, with the injunction that I should never part with them, save to one dearer than my own life, and I have offered them to you. Moreover they are charmed. Let me tell you their history as it has come down to me.

"Years and years ago one of my ancestors, a hot-brained young fellow, fell in love with a lady both proud and fair. She loved him in return, and they plighted their troth to each other. But this young kinsman of mine was not wealthy, and when the lady's haughty sire heard the story of their attachment he fell into a terrible passion, and swore all manner of vengeance on his daughter if she did not renounce him at once and for ever. The girl was true at heart, and very fond of her daring young lover, but at the same time she dreaded her father's wrath, and quailed at the thought of being disinherited. So she put a double face on the matter; she pretended to see the folly of her romantic love, promised strict obedience to her father's commands, and led him to believe that she had utterly cast her young lover off. Yet at the same time she met him every evening at the castle gate, and finally consented to enter into a secret marriage, after which the young man was to go on a long journey, to seek some wondrous fortune that had been left to him in a foreign land, and on his return he was to claim her as his bride.

"They were wedded one dark, stormy night in the cell of an old monk, then, after a few short, sweet hours of rapture, the agony of parting came. At the great gate of the castle he bestowed his parting gift upon her, a string of rubies. An old necromancer had polished and set them at an immense cost, nearly all the young bridegroom possessed; and in every lustrous gem, so the tradition runs, he had inserted a drop of blood, drawn from this ardent lover's heart. A silly story, you will say, Lady Maud, but at any rate it is a fact that these rubies blazed with a crimson splendour such as no other rubies ever possessed. When he twined them amid her raven hair that night she stood crowned with an aureole of flame, and, after he had left her and was far on his journey, he could see the red gleam of the rubies through all the storm and darkness. Moreover they were charmed in some mysterious manner by this weird old necromancer.

"When danger or trouble threatened their possessor they grew pallid and lustreless, and, it is said, that years after, when this self-same young bride received tidings of her far-off husband's death, upon opening her jewel-case, she found her rubies lying in a dim heap, like so many bits of ice.

"But enough of these old-time legends; I will only add that these gems have been in my family ever since that day, and have always borne the name

of the Charmed Rubies. My mother, a woman of rare sincerity, held to the old belief in their mysterious power. But whether they still possess it or not, I will leave you to determine.

"I have offered them to you, Lady Maud, because they are the dearest treasure I possess. You can wear them at Lady Heathcote's ball, or reject them, and with them the true love I offer you.

"For the present I will subscribe myself,

"Your humble servant,
"TORQUILSTONE."

The letter fluttered down from Maud's nerveless fingers, and for several moments she sat pale and almost breathless. Then, as if impelled by a kind of fascination, she drew the golden casket towards her. It opened with a sharp snap, and there they lay in a great crimson coil, gleaming and blinking at her, like so many eyes of flame.

A cold thrill awoke over her, and her heart stood still, as she gazed upon them, expecting every instant to see their fiery splendour change to deadly pallor. But they glowed on, and after a while, in spite of her terror, she ventured to lift them from the casket.

A long, lustrous string, magnificently set, and fastened by an antique clasp, bearing the same coat-of-arms that ornamented the casket. She let them slip back and forth through her slender fingers for a moment or two, then, turning to the mirror, she wound them round her head.

The light reflected from behind her brought out all their wondrous brightness, causing her to start back with an exclamation of affright. She seemed to herself to be crowned with living fire, and her cheeks and eyes glowed with a vivid splendour they had never known before.

Tearing the charmed rubies from her brow, she put them back into the casket, and retreated to her arm-chair, panting and affrighted, like a very child.

The late night hours wore slowly by, and still she sat there, thinking, thinking; and the more she thought the sadder and paler her young face grew. The fire on the marble hearth burned down to a fitful glimmer, and at last the chill gray morning came, and looked through the lofty windows on the gleaming gems that strewed the table, and on the proud young heiress, still sitting there, with pallid cheeks and wide-open, sleepless eyes.

CHAPTER IV.

All love is sweet,
Common as light is love,
And its familiar voice wears not over.

Percy Bysshe Shelley.

"Go away, Cecil, I wish to be alone now."

The tirewoman stood irresolute, still holding the jewel casket in her hand.

"But, my lady," she ventured to remonstrate, "you'll suffer me to clasp your diamonds first, you surely mean to wear them with that robe?"

Maud made an impatient gesture.

"Cecil, will you do as I bid you? Take the jewels away. I shall wear none of them to-night, and leave me until I ring for you."

The girl put down the casket, and made her exit in high displeasure.

"Miss Maud is certainly losing her wits," she averred, rehearsing matters with her fellow servants. "She's wearing that new velvet robe, coal black, you know, and won't put on a jewel. I'd set my heart on seeing her wear her diamonds, they're just the thing for black velvet, and, only to vex me, I do believe, she won't. There's no sense in such contrariness, that's what I say."

Cecil sat down and folded her hands, feeling herself a much-injured and aggrieved individual. In the meanwhile her young mistress, left to herself, sat down also, and, resting her forehead on her folded hands, fell into deep thought.

The last hour had come!

In fifteen minutes the coach would be at the door to take her to Lady Heathcote's ball, and she was still undecided and irresolute. Not in regard to her own heart, however—she knew that well enough—but she dreaded her father's displeasure. He was to have her answer on the morrow that was to make her a betrothed bride.

What should she do?

For the hundredth time she pondered the matter over, hoping to find some loop-hole for escape, but in vain.

There was nothing to be done but to face the matter boldly and truthfully, no evasion or parley would avail, she must decide, and at once too, for even then she could hear her father's impatient tread in the halls below; and the roll of her carriage wheels came up from the direction of the stables. In ten minutes she would be summoned, and on the decision of that brief time depended the weal or woe of all her coming life.

What should she do? She put her hands to her head, pushing back the heavy bands of her raven hair, and strove to quiet her fluttering pulses, to bring her mind to a calm and reasonable decision; but, despite all her efforts, her very finger-tips

seemed to thrill with happy expectation, and, crowding down every other emotion, was the thought that, in a few short moments, she might once again meet him face to face.

Nameless, unknown, yet haughty Mistress Maud, with all her wealth and wondrous beauty, loved him, this strange man, who had dared to send her such a strange gift. Hitherto, she had striven to hide this truth even from herself, but now, at this last moment, when she was about to lose him for ever, her woman's heart asserted itself, and she acknowledged her love. But her cheeks tingled and her proud eyes drooped, for she was as haughty as her old father, this dainty Mistress Maud.

What if this man, who had won her heart so easily, should deceive her? What if he were an impostor, an adventurer, as her father named him? Twelve moons back and his very existence was unknown to her; and since their first meeting their hours of intercourse had been few and far between. Quite a romantic affair was that first meeting. It happened after this wise:—

Travelling in Switzerland, with a gay summer party, Mistress Maud met with an accident and an adventure. They had been sight-seeing all the live-long day, clambering amid mountain passes, and loitering on the shores of sunny lakes, and the close of the afternoon found them thoroughly wearied, and glad to turn their faces homeward. But there was a low belt of greenish yellow along the western horizon, and a low mutter of thunder. The guide shook his head ominously, as he led up the ponies, and hinted at putting up for the night at a little wayside inn just ahead. But Sir Felix Montessor, the head of the party, would not assent. You would not find him resigning his good quarters, and excellent supper, for the rude beds, and mean fare, of a tavern, because it chanced to thunder a little. Push ahead, they would get home in good time; and the guide obeyed.

For an hour or so they got on bravely enough; the ponies went like the wind, and the gay party made the hills resound with gay songs and merry laughter. But all the while the clouds were steadily gathering, the belt of greenish yellow growing broader and broader, until the whole heavens were overcast, and the waning light of day was entirely blotted out. The breeze dropped all at once into ominous silence, not a leaf stirred, not an insect chirped; the very soul of nature seemed to stand still, save for the muffled boom of the sea. Then, swift as thought, came a crash, a rush as of many waters, a glaring blaze, and the roar and rattle of a hundred guns. The storm was upon them.

Sir Felix and his daughter chanced to occupy the foremost carriage, and on the edge of the forest they came to a dead halt. The guide leaped down from his box to reconnoitre.

"Not an inch farther in this direction," he said; "we have a perfect barricade ahead of us; we shall have to remain here until daylight, sir."

But Sir Felix swore a round oath, and went down to judge of the obstacles for himself.

"Pretty formidable," he assented, "but we can go round—'tis only a mile or two farther. Come, let us take up the line of march!"

But the entire party protested with all their might. The road was rough and unfrequented, and thick with dangerous passes; it would be impossible to make the journey on such a night. The guide was right; they would be forced to remain until daylight.

"As you like," replied the old man, stoutly; "I shall go on."

And off he went, while the very earth seemed to rock and reel beneath him.

Maud grew pale, as she sat amid her cushions, hiding her eyes from the blinding glare of the lightning; and her companions looked after her with terror and misgiving, none daring to share the peril to which her rash father was exposing her, except Guy Livingstone, who, mounting a spare donkey, and giving his sister into the care of a friend, dashed after the little pony carriage, as it went heaving and rocking down the dark and unfrequented road.

But the darkness became intense, as they proceeded into the forest, and Guy soon found that there was a wide difference between his own bonnie roan mare and the stupid thing that held him in its saddle.

For his life he could not coax or compel the donkey into a trot. He shied, stumbled, and finally, as the thunder rolled and the lightning blazed, stood still, trembling with affright, and utterly regardless of whip or spur.

Poor Guy almost tore his hair in despair and rage, and at last leaped from his saddle, and started after his lady-love on foot, determined to share her fate at all risks.

But it is often easier to determine than to execute, and with all his fiery ardour our impetuous lover soon found himself groping in impenetrable darkness, stumbling over roots and sinking into morasses, while the pony-carriage faded from sight and hearing like the vision of a dream.

In the meantime the storm increased, the rain poured down in sluices, the thunder was deafening, and the lightning leaped from one mountain peak to another. But the stubborn old master of Montreux Hall did not falter or turn back.

"Just as safe pushing homeward as standing still like those idiots behind us. Hurry on, my boy; a good snapper and a warm drink when we reach our quarters."

And the driver urged on his ponies in the very teeth of the blast.

Maud lay back upon her cushions with clasped hands and colourless cheeks, catching at her father's arm at every fresh breeze.

"Don't be a coward, ladybird," the old man said, half repenting his rashness on her account, "we're getting on bravely," now. We'll laugh at our fine friends to-morrow."

But even while he spoke there came a vivid flash—a crash that seemed to split the solid earth, and the little carriage stood still. Even the old man was daunted for the moment.

"Courage, pet," he whispered, stroking Maud's cold cheek, then he put on his head and called to the driver. But he did not answer. Sir Felix called again. No response!

"The man must be deaf," he said. "Wait one moment, Maud, and I'll rouse him."

He threw open the door, and alighted from the carriage. Maud heard him calling to the driver, then she caught his awful cry:

"Oh, Heaven! the man's gone!"

(To be continued.)

SCIENCE.

WATCH CASE SPRINGS.—First, draw the temper in all springs; never put one in without. If it needs fitting, do it. Then cover the spring with soap, heat to a bright red tempering heat, and throw it in oil. The soap should scale the spring, leaving it white. Then draw to a blue, polish and draw again to a blue, and again polish and draw to the blue, and the spring is ready for the case. It is a well-known principle that steel should be at a neutral temper, neither hard nor soft. If the jeweller will try this, he will not make any more brass springs.—R. B. F.

SOLUBILITY OF OXYGEN IN WATER.—Oxygen is more soluble in water than nitrogen. Water takes up about one twenty-fifth of its bulk of oxygen, at 32 deg. Fahr., and one thirty-third at 60 deg. Fahr. According to Bunsen, 100 cubic inches of water dissolve 4.11 cubic inches of oxygen at 32 deg. Fahr., and 2.99 cubic inches at 60 deg. Fahr.; and the same author states that 100 cubic inches of water at 32 deg. absorb 2.03 cubic inches of nitrogen, and 1.48 cubic inches at 59 deg. Fahr. These numbers are materially affected by pressure, as shown by the results obtained by Mallet.

PHOTOGRAPHIC IMPRESSIONS WITH FUCHSIN.—A piece of linen goods coloured with fuchsin and dried was exposed to the light under a photographic negative, when the image of the plate became visible on the goods, the picture looking grayish and faded where the lights were strongest. Still the picture was rather weak, and the goods were soaked for two days in a bath of sulphate of copper, when the picture was found to be more developed. After several rinsings in water, and two days' exposure on the grass, the rest of the goods was bleached white, leaving the picture of a pure violet tint on a white background.

IRON CEMENT.—Winkler has found that the best iron cement can be made by preparing a mixture composed of 16 parts of clean wrought-iron filings, 3 parts of pulverized sal ammoniac, and 2 parts of flowers of sulphur. This mixture can be kept in a dry package any length of time, unchanged; and when required for use it is better to reduce one part of it with 12 parts of iron filings, and enough water containing a little of sulphuric acid, to form a firm paste. When thus reduced it must be immediately applied, as it sets rapidly. The author recommends it for joining broken pieces of cast iron, and for stopping large fractures. For very fine work, pure pulverized iron filings, such as apothecaries use, can be substituted for the coarse article.

VOLCANIC DISTURBANCES IN THE EAST.—The news of most terrible earthquake shocks and volcanic disturbances comes to us from the Philippine Islands. In the small island named Camiguin, near to Misamis, for some months past a succession of most violent earthquakes has been experienced, causing crevices, etc., in the open country. On the 1st of May, about five o'clock in the evening, the earth burst asunder, and an opening was formed 1,500 feet long. Smoke and ashes, earth and stones, were thrown up and covered the ground far and near. At about seven o'clock, as darkness was coming on, this crater burst into activity with a loud explosion, followed by a

shower of lava and ashes. About 150 persons were destroyed. The eruption of the new volcano has since been so tremendous that the inhabitants have forsaken the island, and of the 26,000 previously there, not 800 are left. Camiguin is only about thirty-six miles in circumference, and was very productive in abaca (the Manila hemp), yielding annually from 30,000 to 40,000 piculs, or more than a tenth of the produce of the world. There is little hope of the island ever being again reoccupied or cultivated.

GARDNER'S IMPROVED STEERING APPARATUS.—This new ship's steering apparatus is to be used more especially when the rudder-post is set raking or inclined. The upper end of a raking or inclined rudder-post is made polygonal in form, and passes up through a hole in the bottom of a box or casing and fits into a hole in a large bevel gear wheel, so that the rudder-post can rise and lower without affecting the operation of the steering apparatus. The bevel gear wheel revolves upon the bottom of the box or casing, and into its teeth, upon its front and rear sides, mesh the teeth of two bevel gear wheels, one of which wheels is rigidly attached to a counter shaft. The other wheel is run loosely upon this shaft, and serves simply to hold the wheel down to its seat and gives steadiness of motion to the gearing. The shaft is placed at right angles to the axis of the rudder-post, and its journals revolve in bearings attached to or formed in the box or casing. To the counter shaft is attached a gear wheel, into the teeth of which mesh the teeth of a gear wheel attached to the shaft of the steering wheel, the journals of which revolve in bearings attached to the box or casing. The gear wheels are bevelled more or less to correspond with the angle between the shafts. The steering wheel is thus always vertical, and consequently in the best position to be used by the steersman.

ANALYSIS OF THE BLOOD.—The zoöchemical analysis of Professor von Gorup-Besanez contains the most accurate method for determining the constitution of the blood of any hitherto published. It appears from this learned work that blood is of a very complex composition, but is still capable of exact analysis. The normal blood contains water, fibrine, albumen, hemoglobin, fat, fatty alkalies, lecithin, cholesteroline, urea, grape sugar, creatine, creatinine, uric acid, phosphates, sulphates, and carbonates of the alkalies, chloride of sodium, chloride of potassium, phosphate of lime and magnesia, iron, and traces of silica, oxygen, nitrogen, and carbonic acid. The specific gravity of human blood varies between 1.045 and 1.075, and its temperature in the veins between 93 deg. and 104 deg. Fahr. It is one of the triumphs of modern science that so complicated a body can be determined with so great accuracy. By means of the microscope and spectroscopy, the general constituents and the probable origin of the blood can be ascertained, but a complete analysis is a long and tedious operation, the description of which occupies forty-two pages of the work in question. Professor von Gorup gives the best methods for deciding upon the origin and age of blood stains on metal, wood, stone, cloth, &c., and shows that, in judicial cases, these questions can be ascertained with absolute certainty.

ONE POUND OF COAL PER HORSE POWER.

It is said that a firm in London is now constructing the most economical steam engines in the world. For their mill engines these manufacturers guarantee a consumption of less than 2 pounds of coal per horse power per hour; and they claim that in some cases these engines in practice have brought the figure as low as 1 pound of coal per horse power per hour. To realize the importance of this improvement we must consider that ordinary steam engines in many cases burn as much as 10 pounds of coal per horse power per hour. This is common, when the boiler admits of the evaporation of only 6 pounds of water for every pound of coal. When engines are supplied with Cornish boilers, so celebrated for their economy (since they evaporate 12 pounds of water for every pound of coal), the ordinary consumption is 5 pounds of coal per horse power per hour; and the reduction of this amount to 3 or even 2½ pounds has thus far been considered something extraordinary—the best result, in fact, to be practically obtained. That there is, however, still room for improvement is evident from the theory of the mechanical equivalent of heat. One pound of good anthracite coal will produce, in combustion, 14,220 units of heat; while 1 pound of bituminous coal will produce 13,500 units. Let us adopt the round number, 14,000 units; that is to say, the proper combustion of 1 pound of coal should heat 14,000 pounds of water 1 degree, or 140 pounds 100 degrees, or 14 pounds 1,000 degrees Fahr. But heating water 1,000 degrees changes it into steam; and experiments have proved that it takes exactly as much heat to change 14 pounds of water into steam as to heat 149 pounds of water 100 degrees. Therefore the 14,000 units of

heat developed by the combustion of 1 pound of coal will change 14 pounds of water into steam; and it is by the intervention of this steam that we have to obtain the mechanical equivalent of the 14,000 units of heat.

The well-established mechanical equivalent of each unit is 772 foot pounds. In fact, for every foot that we cause 772 pounds to descend, we may actually obtain a unit of heat; and therefore we are entitled to expect inversely the development of a force of 772 foot pounds for every unit of heat expended. The 14,000 units of heat, obtained by the combustion of 1 pound of coal, should give us, then, 14,000 multiplied by 772, or 10,808,000 foot pounds. If the coal is burned in 1 hour, we ought to obtain this force per hour; and, as 1 horse power is equal to a force of 33,000 foot pounds per minute, or 33,000 multiplied by 60, equal to 1,980,000 foot pounds per hour, we ought to have 10,808,000 divided by 1,980,000, or 5.4 horse power per pound of coal consumed per hour.

The best engines, therefore, in place of obtaining, as heretofore, only one tenth or one twentieth of the theoretical equivalent of the heat consumed, are reported to have reached nearly one fifth, which is certainly a wonderful advance. Of course, the full theoretical equivalent can never be expected, for reasons which we will not now discuss.

Most engineers are agreed on the main features of the most economical steam engines. They are: Proportionally large boilers, with large heating surfaces, and proper grates; heating of the feed water in the condenser; high pressure in connection with proper cut-off arrangements, so as to utilize the expansion; careful protection from loss of heat by radiation; and, above all things, intelligent and faithful engineers and firemen. Many moderately good boilers and engines lose all claim to reasonable economy by improper treatment in firing.

MECHANISM FOR ADJUSTING THE ROLLERS OF CARDING MACHINES.

This invention pertains to an improved construction and arrangement of parts, whereby the position of the bearings of rollers working in combination with the main cylinder of a carding engine or of other rollers, may be adjusted or regulated with facility and accuracy.

In applying the invention to the working and clearing rollers of carding engines the roller bearing fits between ribs cast on the outer side of a plate, the inner part of which fits between ribs cast on the bend of the carding engine, the bearing, the plate, and the bend being secured together by a bolt and nut. The roller is adjusted by a right and left handed regulating screw, one part of which is screwed into a projection from the bearing, and the other part is screwed into the plate; consequently, when the regulating screw is turned partly round the bearing is moved to and fro in the plate. The bearing of the working roller is regulated laterally, in addition to its motion to and from the centre of the main cylinder by nuts on a segmental screw, one end of which is screwed into the plate of the bearing of the roller, the other end passing through a recess in the corresponding plate of the bearing of the roller.

The regulating screw for the bearing of the working roller is made partly with a coarse thread and partly with a fine thread. When this regulating screw is turned partly round the motion to or from the centre of the main cylinder, imparted to the bearing, is equal to the difference between the two pitches of the threads. By this arrangement the utmost delicacy of adjustment is secured.

REMEMBER YOUR OWN EARLY DAYS.—If every merchant would remember the days of his own clerkship, when he was launched, friendless and unknown, upon a great city, full of temptations, and recall his yearning at that time for sympathy and society, he would, less seldom than he now does, regard those in his employ as mere machines. Much of the deterioration of clerks is owing to this indifference of employers. "No man cares whether you stand or fall," the tempter whispers; so self-respect and honesty drift away, and the prisoners' cell holds many whom a kind word of encouragement might have made good and valuable members of society.

NEW MODE OF TREATMENT IN LOCKJAW.—Dr. Demarquay has discovered a new method of treating that species of lockjaw which is caused by wounds. It possesses this advantage over all other methods that have been tried, that, while they have invariably failed, it has been successful in two cases. It appears that the persons attacked by lockjaw are particularly sensitive to cold, which aggravates all their symptoms, and greatly increases their sufferings. Accordingly, Dr. Demarquay placed his two patients—one of whom had received a deep wound in the calf of the leg, while in the other case the lockjaw seizure had followed

upon the amputation of a limb—in a room heated to from 64 to 72 deg. Fahr., where they could perspire freely without fear of draughts. The spasms and muscular contractions which form the chief features in lockjaw were relieved by injections of morphia, the places selected for these injections being those where the muscular contractions were most painful. The result of this treatment was that the patients were soon able to open their mouths, and assuage the terrible thirst which is one of the concomitants of lockjaw, and ultimately recovered.

THE ESTATES OF THE EX-EMPRESS EUGENIE.—The Spanish estates of the Ex-Empress Eugénie are said to have the following origin:—In consequence of the 1823 Bourbon expedition Spain owed France some millions, which, being capitalized, would in 1854 have amounted to 3,200,000*l*. A convention between the two Governments, however, reduced this sum to 1,000,000*l*., which was moreover gifted to the Empress, and conveyed to her in the shape of vast tracts of land, which she had stocked with the most approved "plants" of French vine.

THE RAILINGS OF REGENT'S PARK.—Although the complaints to Mr. Ayrton have been frequent at the condition of the Regent's Park railings, there is no intention of proceeding with the proposed alterations. The south side alone will have iron railings, and the east and west will be left with the wooden ones, which abruptly terminate with a large open space between them and the iron structure. The excuse is, of course, expense. What a condition of poverty the country must be in if we are to understand our Government on their own terms! But it is not a to-day's experience that the greatest undertakings may be ruined by undue care of expenditure.

PRESENTS FOR THE QUEEN.—Another Burman Embassy will start for England next month. The Ken Woodcock will be despatched to Europe with letters and suitable presents for the Queen. Three vases of gold were given out one day three or four weeks since to make a necklace for Her Gracious Majesty the Queen. Fancy the Queen wearing an ornament weighing nine or ten pounds on her neck! The real ambassador in the present case will be a good specimen of a really clever Burman Minister, who will be able to explain himself through an interpreter to Mr. Gladstone, or to the Queen, or to any person feeling an interest in the affairs of Burmah. The embassy will be suitably composed of men who will be no disgrace to the King or State of Burmah.

THE COUNTESS BENEDETTI.—The story of the Countess Benedetti, wife of the French Minister to Prussia, is worth recording. She was once a Greek slave, landed at Alexandria by Jocos, the celebrated merchant of Constantinople. She had been educated for sale, and was consequently full of accomplishments. One of the wealthiest of the Arab bankers in Alexandria purchased the girl to wait upon his wife, to whom he was much attached. The Greek girl, lively and amusing, diverted the eyes of the harem, and soon became the ruling spirit there. In course of time the wife died, and the aged husband, regretting that he could not marry her, adopted her as his child and the heir to his enormous fortune. At his death the former slave inherited his wealth, and as Benedetti, at that time a young attaché belonging to the French Consulate at Alexandria, happened to present himself to the heiress, won her affections, and they were married. The old merchant's money enabled Benedetti to cut his way to a conspicuous position in diplomacy, and his wife, lovely and accomplished, reigned for a long time over the world of fashion in Paris.

THE PRINCE IMPERIAL'S "TAMROUR."—The return of the Emperor and his son to Chiselhurst has been hastened, it is said, by the impatience manifested by the young Prince to behold his favourite Tamour. And who is the favourite? The smallest pony of Arab race ever beheld. The animal is of a delicate cream colour, with long tail and flowing mane, the gift of an Arab Sheikh who revolted against French authority in Algeria and was pardoned in the year 1863. When the pony arrived at St. Cloud crowds had assembled at the gate to witness his entrance into the park. He was bought in at the late sale of the Imperial stud by the Princess Mathilde, and immediately despatched to Chiselhurst. A gentleman who was present when Tamour was landed at Dover describes him as being sadly deteriorated by neglect, by the voyage, by sea sickness, and perhaps also by increase of age since the time when he was exhibited to the favoured few who had obtained tickets from Gambell, the keeper of the Imperial stables at the Tuileries. His eye was dulled, his coat unkempt and shaggy, and his tail matted. When he arrived at St. Cloud his shoes alone served the Paris journalists for a week's gossip. They were of silver, and on each one was engraved a motto from the Koran. The Prince Imperial is passionately attached to Tamour, and once declared that of the things he had left behind

the pony was the most regretted of all. The Prince has grown too tall to ride Tamour now, so that the attachment is purely disinterested.

NEW PENSION ACT.—One of the Acts passed in the late Session was to extend the provisions of the Pension Commutation Acts, 1869 and 1870, to certain public civil officers, and to consolidate and amend the same. The statute is to apply to officers in Her Majesty's naval or land forces, and to persons who have retired or been removed from public civil offices in consequence of the abolition of their offices, or for the purpose of facilitating improvements in the departments, and to whom annual pensions have been granted by way of compensation for such retirement or removal. The Treasury may commute pensions, and for the purpose of advising on the cases of applicants for commutation of pensions a "Commutation Board" is to be formed; all moneys paid for commutation of pensions may be repaid by annuities. "If any applicant for commutation under this Act wilfully make any false declaration in relation to any matter or thing required by any regulation made in pursuance of this Act he shall be deemed to be guilty of a misdemeanour, and shall be liable on conviction to forfeit all claim to his pension or the value thereof, and to be imprisoned for any term not exceeding two years, with or without hard labour." On a pension-holder whose pension has been commuted accepting any public employment a deduction is to be made from the salary payable to him, and, in the event of his becoming entitled to a pension, the amount granted is not to exceed the amount which he might have received had his pension not been commuted.

THE CRUISE OF THE BRIGANTINE.

CHAPTER VIII.

Thou wear a lion's hide! doff it for shame,
And hang a calf's skin on those recant limbs.

King John.

"Ho! a flashing diamond in a dainty hand! By San Antonio, my patron, 'tis a beardless boy who flashes the gem before our eyes. Let's see it, lad!" These words came from the lips of a gigantic buccaneer but too well known for his cruelty—especially to women captives—among the pirates of the Spanish main and the Caribbean Sea.

Pedro Polias, a Biscayan Spaniard by birth, was held as a terrific fend even by the desperate class he sailed with, and perhaps Hark Cringle was the only man on all those waters who did not fear him.

As this man leaped from his fully manned and armed boat upon the deck of the "Serpent of the Sea," he strode towards Victor, who, holding the jewel up to the view of Gaspar, had not noticed his approach, so earnest was his appeal to be permitted to go with the Italian on the expedition he was about to make.

Haughtily, with flashing eyes, the lad turned towards the giant, thrusting the jewel inside his vest into some inner pocket as he did so, and replied:

"I know thee not, rude stranger, and keep mine own property for my own gaze."

"Ha! Insolence from such a bantam? Child—a buffet shall teach thee respect to thy superiors!"

And the pirate raised his broad hand to strike the boy.

Gaspar laid his hand indignantly upon his sword, but quicker yet was the act of the boy himself. He drew from beneath his vest a pistol with a barrel of bright steel, and, cocking it as he raised it full towards the pirate's breast, he cried:

"Strike, coward, an thou dar'st! Strike, and as thy hand falls thy coward soul shall go shrieking down to its future home!"

Coward-like, the gigantic Spaniard sprang back from before the muzzle of the weapon in that small white hand, from the indignant fire of those flashing eyes—sprang back so suddenly that he struck his heels against a ring-bolt in the deck and fell backward into the water.

"Into the cabin, lad—into the cabin! I command it!" cried Gaspar to the boy, for he knew when Pedro Polias again stood upon that deck it would be to murder, if the cause of his mischance was yet in sight.

"Not to save my life would I stir, but thou art an officer, and I obey thy command!" said the boy, proudly.

He turned to the cabin, entering it just as the well-drenched giant emerged, spluttering from the water, and, aided by some of his own men, clambered to the deck.

"Ten thousand fiends! Where is the boy?" shouted Pedro Polias when he gained the deck.

"Where is the puny wretch?"

"He is beyond thy reach, Captain Pedro Polias—in the cabin of his friend and master, Hark Cringle, whom thou knowest too well to anger," replied Gaspar. "If thou hast come on business, I will

attend to it—if merely on a friendly visit, I will welcome thee to the forward cabin. For our captain hath been wounded in a battle fought outside before the storm came on, and it is the surgeon's order that he be not disturbed."

"Wounded? and in a battle? Then we heard the guns inland where I and mine went on a revel to the village of San Ventino. Where is the prize?"

"We took none. We were beaten off, losing half our men, for we found a vessel armed and manned so well that we were overmatched."

"Ha! ha! 'Twas well for them I was not there with my sloop. The 'Diablo de las Manos Rojas' would have had a different tale to tell. But the boy who drew a pistol on me must die! Call him out and I will not disturb your wounded captain."

"I will not. The boy did not deserve a blow, and did but raise his hand to save himself from thy assault."

"Diablos! Did not deserve a blow? Why, he answered me—Pedro Polias—with daring insolence. A blow was nothing—his punishment should have been his instant death. Now, call him forth, or by my head I'll order my men aboard and hold this deck while I swing him from the gall above thy head!"

"Ho! Serpents of the Sea! Ho! followers of Hark Cringle, ho!" shouted Gaspar. "To your deck and hold it with this threatening bluster!"

The brave Italian drew his own sword instantly, and placed his back to the high cabin deck, while his men, to the number of twenty at least, sprang to their arms.

Meantime, as many men, or even more, from the Spaniard's boat sprang on the forward deck to back their master.

"The boy—the boy, or else we fight!" hoarsely cried the Spanish pirate.

"I am here! Come thou single-handed, and take me as thou dar'st!" cried Victor himself, armed now with sword and dagger, standing in the cabin door. "Coward! thou dost tremble even with a boy's defiance!"

"'Tis with anger that I quake. I'll cleave thee in twain for this fresh insolence!" cried the pirate.

He took one step forward, then, white with a new terror, he halted.

For at the cabin door, ghastly in look yet terrible, with his blue eyes flashing, stood Hark Cringle, his long musket raised over the stump of his left arm and its muzzle bearing full in the face of the Spaniard.

"Hold thy fire, Hark Cringle, hold thy fire! I did but jest when I said I'd hang the boy!" cried the cowering wretch.

"It was a sorry jest. Bid thy men back into their boat, or I'll send thee first to Hades, then attend to them!" cried the One-armed Buccaneer, his finger on the trigger of his gun, his eye ranged along its barrel.

At a sign from their leader the followers of Pedro Polias left the deck.

"Now come thou alone into my cabin, and on thy good behaviour too, and I will hear whatever thou hast to say. I thank thee for thy coming, for I was giving up to weakness, when with anger I find I have enough of life left to guard myself and mine right stoutly."

"Good master, thou art strong only in thy great excitement. Thou wilt weaken when 'tis over. Send him away, and to thy couch again for rest, I pray."

The youth, Victor, said this in a low, pleading tone, which no one else could hear; and, while the eyes of Hark Cringle beamed only kindness on him, the latter made this reply:

"'Twould look like cowardice, my boy; and, from thine own daring, I know thou wouldst not counsel a show of that in me!"

"The known brave are never charged with cowardice by those whose thoughts are worth the having," urged the boy.

"I cannot yield in this, good lad. Get me a flagon of brandy now, and let its fiery strength avail me until I can send this brute away. Obey me, lad, as thou lovest me."

Victor saw too well that importunity was vain, and as his master moved back to a seat in his cabin, placing his gun behind him, he had hurried to get the drink.

The Spanish pirate came in and took a seat near the cabin door, for, even wounded as was Hark Cringle now, the giant feared him; for once, in the presence of all his men, the One-armed Buccaneer, with his right hand, had clutched him by the throat and dashed him so heavily upon his own deck that he required help to rise; and he, as well as all who had seen him in battle, knew that no braver man ever rode the sea than Hark Cringle.

"Place drink before my visitor also, good Victor," said Hark Cringle when the boy gave him the golden flagon filled with brandy. "Then while he enjoys our hospitality I'll learn the cause of his visit, and why he sought to wreak vengeance on one so weak, yet so brave as thou, the saviour of my life, have proved thyself to be."

"The saviour of thy life!" exclaimed Pedro Polias. "What canst thou mean?"

"Precisely what I say. This morn, o'erwhelmed with numbers, and all my boarders mowed down by one dread shower of grape, I fell wounded on the stranger's deck. Another second had been my last, when, in the face of full fifty raging foes, that boy sprang to my help, and dragged me to my own deck. That I am here and live I owe to him. Now know why his enemy is mine, and why I with life and all my power will shield him against all harm."

"Hark Cringle, Pedro Polias craves thy pardon, and offers excuse unto the lad," said the Spaniard, with a courteous bow, strangely in contrast with his previous rudeness. "I had come down from the village up the river, where I and mine held high revel all the past night, and I was yet hot with drink. We heard firing outside, and hurried down to see what was going on. The bay was rough, and before I went to mine own sloop I thought I'd visit thine and learn the news. When I drew near I saw a diamond, wondrous large and brilliant, in the hands of the youth, and rudely, I acknowledge, asked to see it. The lad answered sanely, and my un-brooked temper rose."

"A diamond, boy—and one of value?" asked the One-armed Buccaneer, looking at Victor. "How didst thou obtain the gem?"

"It is an heirloom—hath been in my family for many generations, good master."

"Thy family? Saidst thou not to me thou wert alone?"

"I spoke but truth, my master. I am the last of a proud and noble race."

"I believe thee. Let me see the gem."

The boy drew forth a ring—a curious piece of antique workmanship—in which a single diamond of the purest water glittered.

The One-armed Buccaneer took it in his outstretched hand, looked on it with a strange, perplexed expression in his face.

"I have seen this gem before. When we are alone I must know more about thee," he murmured, low, so that Victor alone could hear him.

Then, speaking aloud, he said:

"It is a brilliant stone—be careful of it, good lad. Now accept the excuse that Pedro Polias offers, and give him thy hand. We who follow a rude calling on rough waters had best be friends when we can be so with honour!"

Victor, with some reluctance, crossed the cabin and placed his small fair hand in the outstretched palm of the giant, and said:

"I am sorry I replied so rudely, senior, but, young as I am, dark sorrows have made my temper hasty!"

"Lad, the fault was all mine own, and I drown all unkindness in the drink thou hast brought. Health, lad, health—a long life and a merry one!"

The youth bowed respectfully and fell back behind his master, for the eyes of the Spaniard were fixed on him with searching look, which, to say the least, confused him.

"Now tell us of the fight outside. Gaspar said that for once the terror of those seas was worsted."

"Ay, because we did not know how well manned and armed the stranger was."

"A man-of-war—could not her guns have been counted?"

"She was not a regular man-o'-war. Rather the private armed ship of some rich nobleman, cruising for his pleasure, I opine, since there were lovely women on board."

"Lovely women? What hath become of the stranger?"

"Badly torn with shot in hull; her mainmast gone: we do not think she kept afloat in the gale. She seemed sinking when we left her to seek for our own harbour," said Hark Cringle, and he cast a warning glance at Victor, that the lad might not say anything to make Pedro Polias believe otherwise.

"Crippled, she may yet linger above water on our coast," cried the Spaniard. "The gale will go down with the sun, and when it does the sea will fall. To-morrow I'll be in my sloop and look for her. Fair women on board you say?"

"Yes—at least we saw their drapery 'ere we closed."

"Well, I will away. I hope thy full strength will soon return, my capitan."

The Spaniard rose, and Hark Cringle bade Victor escort him to his boat.

"Answer no questions about the strangers," he whispered, as he supposed unobserved by Pedro Polias, when the boy passed him.

But the wily Spaniard did hear him, and knew if there was something to question which was not to be replied to, it was worth his while to make the discovery in some other way.

When 'he boy passed out on deck a look of disappointment and an expression of impatience told that he had been foiled by Gaspar, for the latter, with the barge, had gone.

The boy saw the Spaniard to his boat, bowed

courteously as he rowed away, then alone on the deck gave way to his feelings.

"Gaspar has gone, and now there is no way to warn the helpless, as I could and would have done could I have been of his party. And they will be exposed to a double peril. Not he alone who rests in yonder cabin, but that fiend in human shape who has just left the deck will be on the search when the sun of to-morrow rises for those whose helplessness and beauty will but whet the appetite of those who do not deserve the name of man! What can I do now to avert the peril? For, though unknown to me, I feel a strange impellent which tells me I must save them from a fate so horrible, even if I perish in the work. Oh, why did that fiend come hither when Gaspar's eye was on the jewel and his reluctance fading in its light, when he would have surely yielded to my prayer and have let me go! Ah, the captain calls."

CHAPTER IX.

So much one man can do
That does both act and know.

Andrew Marvell.

WHEN young Sedley reached the beach he saw that there was, indeed, cause for alarm, for the brigantine, in spite of the streams of water rushing from the scuppers with the pumps fully manned, seemed settling by the head.

While he hesitated, for he knew not what to do, the long-boat pushed from the vessel freighted with stores hastily shipped by Lord Radcliffe to land, and the instant it reached the beach, and was unladen, while the ladies terror-stricken gathered together, fearing to see their last hope settle beneath the waters, he sprang into the boat and bade the seamen row swiftly back.

"Tell my husband to come at once on shore. If the vessel sinks, he will perish if he do not haste away," cried Lady Radcliffe.

"The vessel shall not sink, kind lady," said the young officer. "I can stop the leak, I think!"

"He will save her if it is in the power of man!" said Lady Mary, with that confidence which love plants in every bosom.

Algernon Sedley heard her words, and he determined to make them good, for already he had formed his plan.

"My lord," he cried as soon as he got on board, "is it known where this leak hath broken in?"

"A plank, we think, is stove in about the bow, so deep we cannot reach it inboard or out," replied Lord Radcliffe. "All we can do is to strive to keep her afloat until we get as much provision to the shore as we can."

"Please to run aft every gun, my lord, while I try an experiment I once saw used effectually on an Indianan where I served in my first voyage," cried the young officer. "Two men can aid me, and if I do not stop the leak, I will at least so lessen it as to give more time to get necessities on shore."

"Make trial of thy plan, whatever it may be, for all that we have tried has failed," said the nobleman, turning to see another boat-land sent on shore.

Sedley called the sail-maker and boatswain to his side, and while one brought a large studding-sail up he caused the other to convey a heap of tar and oakum with haste forward to where he made preparation to try his plan. With the largest sail needles they had and coarse twine he had the oakum sewed thickly to the upper side of the sail, then poured tar on it plentifully.

Fastening two deep-sea leads to sink it beneath the bow, with a rope to either upper corner, the young officer now dropped the sail in beneath the cable under the prow and lowered it. In a brief time the weight grew less on the lowering ropes, then he knew that the section of the leak had caught the padded sail.

"Now work your pumps, my lord," he cried; "the leak will no longer gain upon you."

Lord Radcliffe doubted, but the men worked more cheerily when they heard young Sedley's cry, for he was a universal favourite on board, and soon the carpenter sounding in the well announced the depth of water as decreasing.

Cheer on cheer arose when this news reached the ears of the nearly exhausted crew, and Lord Radcliffe, impetuous to express his feelings as the sister whom he had frowned upon for the same act, now threw his arms about young Sedley's neck, embracing while he thanked him.

"My lord, we've no time for compliments," said the young hero. "The brigantine must be unladen, and be careened before we can close the leak, which I have checked for the time, so that we can put to sea. I would not alarm you, but the pirate sloop is safe in harbour scarcely a league away. Should she have consorts, and our vicinity be discovered, 'twould be a miracle if we escaped, for we must remain for days to repair, I fear."

"True, my brave lieutenant, true. We will clear ship as fast as possible so as to careen, first getting guns and ammunition all on shore to make the best

defence if we be discovered. For only between victory and death have we choice, when we know what would be their fate in pirate hands."

The hasty glance of the young noble's eyes, directed to the shore, where his wife and sisters stood, told whom he meant.

But now, even while the lessening wind and the lack of sunlight told that the gale and day were both declining, a new and startling sight fell on the vision of young Sedley, and almost as soon caught the glance of Lord Radcliffe.

An armed man was standing on the crest of the hill to leeward of the bay—his form so distinct between them and the sky they could not mistake the fact.

"A spy! a spy! He must be taken and held or we are lost!" cried Sedley.

Instantly he sprang into the boat alongside and bade the rowers pull as they never pulled before to land him quickly on the shore nearest to the point where the man was seen.

The stranger had a glass in his hand it seemed, and he appeared to coolly scan the position of the vessel from his lofty perch until the boat pushed off, when he disappeared from view.

Sedley reached the land, then amid the gathering shades of twilight was seen rushing up the craggy hill, and seen again to stand an instant on the crest where the stranger's form had been. But now the light yielded to the force of night's ebony hand, and whether he went on or returned Lord Radcliffe could not feel assurance.

CHAPTER X.

While there's life there's hope, he cried. Gay.

WHEN Victor, answering Hark Cringle's call, hurried to the cabin, he found the latter fainting on his couch.

The temporary force of the stimulant and the fierce excitement had thrown all of his strong nature into play, and let his will o'ermaster weakness. But now reaction came, and when Victor reached the side of the buccaneer he was in a death-like swoon.

From it the boy strove in vain to lift him by bathing his hot brow, applying wine to his lips, and chafing his hands.

He worked in vain. He rushed out and called the surgeon up, for the latter had lain down for an evening nap he said. He liked to lie and dream when twilight played 'twixt day and night, for 'tis a dreamy hour.

The surgeon came with some potent drug of far more power than wine or water, and at last he brought the captain to consciousness again.

But he looked serious as he placed his hand upon the throbbing pulse and burning brow of his patient.

"Inflammation is hovering over him," he said. "Should delirium set in not all my skill could save him."

"It must—it must! He shall not die—not here—not now! Save him, sir, and such reward as—"

The boy who had begun so earnestly to make this appeal stopped, for the eyes of the doctor were fixed upon him with such a strange, wondering look that he felt into sudden confusion.

"Pardon me, doctor, but I know you will try to save him; for you and he were together in your native land, and loved each other well."

"How knew you that?" said the doctor, in a low, earnest tone.

"I cannot now explain, good sir; the time may come when I can do so. Thou wilt try all that skill can do to save him?"

"Ay, of course I will—and to solve the mystery which hangs about thee," he added, in a lower tone unto himself.

The doctor now went out to prepare a soporific draught and cooling lotions, while the boy, with a fan, strove to give more air to his master.

The eyes of the latter, with a wild, anxious look, seemed to follow the lad's every motion of form and hand as if trying to study out some mental perplexity.

"Victor, hast thou ever stood on English shores?" he asked, faintly.

"Good master, the surgeon hath just left thee, and he saith thy very life depends on quietude. Please ask no questions now. When thy strength comes back then will be time to question and receive replies."

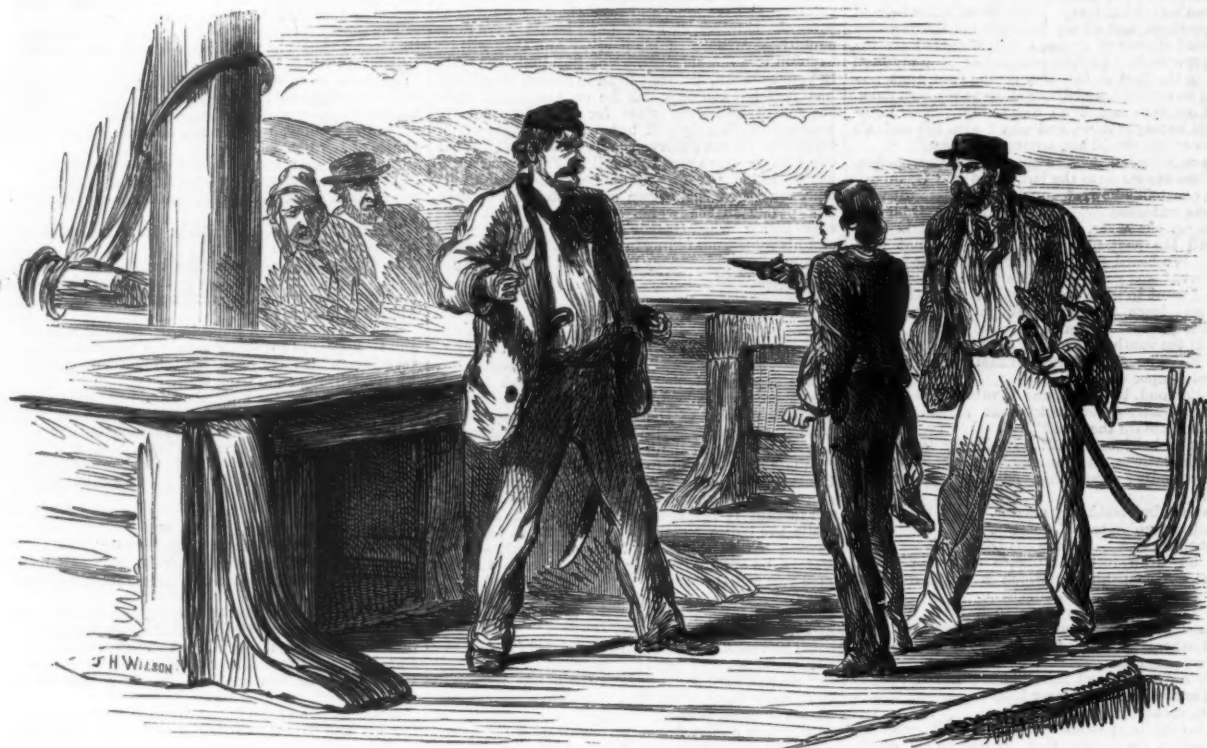
"But, boy, a dream—a wild but pleasant dream—seems to be stealing o'er my senses. Where—where have we met before?"

The boy made no reply, but placed his finger softly on the lips of his master to insist on silence.

The doctor entered a moment after and gave his patient a draught which had an almost instantaneous effect. As he sank away in slumber the doctor laid cloths dampened with lotions on his brow and above his bandaged wounds, then said:

"Skill can do no more. Thy tender nursing must accomplish the rest."

The boy bowed low, and said:



[PEDRO POLIAS COWED.]

"He shall find no lack of care. I would wish to see him live to leave this dreadful course of life and once more hold his own, for Radcliffe Castle now gives sad echo to the stranger's tread."

"Radcliffe Castle! What knowest thou of that old baronial pile?"

"Nothing that I would speak of now—Ah, Senor Gaspar hath returned," said the boy, quickly.

It was true, for the Italian came into the cabin with a hasty step.

"He sleeps—his life is in peril, and he must hear nothing now!" said Victor, in a low tone, to the officer.

The surgeon nodded his head to confirm the words of the boy, and retired.

"To me you can report, and when he wakes I'll tell your story," said Victor, in a low tone, while Gaspar stood gazing at the buccaneer.

Gaspar shook his head.

"I had his orders, and to him alone can I make my report," he said.

"Thou didst not treat me right to go and leave me when I so much desired to bear thee company on thy voyage," said Victor.

"It was not his will that thou shouldst go, good lad. Thou wilt soon learn, if thou dost not yet know it, that his will on board this craft is law."

"He would not be angered at thy compliance with a mere whim of mine."

"Thou dost not know him. Let but a shadow of disobedience cross his fiery will, and he becomes more like a maddened tiger than the gentle man he is at other times. I must see the crew and keep them from carousal—for that fiend, Pedro Polias, hath some dark plan afoot. I caught him watching me when I came in across the bay, though he doth not know I did so. One of his boat's crew lit his pipe while his boat lay under the shadow of the mangroves near the creek, and the flash gave me an instant's glance at all."

"Pedro Polias—he is, for one so cowardly, a dangerous man. For cowards are ever cunning. The brave alone are open, free, and work above disguise! If he is near and on the watch, 'twere most necessary to be on constant guard. But wilt thou not tell me, Gaspar, what thou hast seen while on thy recent mission? I pray thee, do."

"Ask me not, brave lad, to do what thou wouldst not do thyself. Disobedience to his will is not only treason unto our leader, but dishonour unto him who doth it, and weakness to all with whom he serves. When he wakes then call me."

"I will; but I do not deem that even he would hold it wrong were I to know now what he will surely let me hear when thy report is made," said Victor.

The Italian did not make reply, but went out

upon the deck, while Victor, lighting the silver lamp which swung from the beam above his head, sat down near the slumbering captain.

"He hath seen them; they are safe from the storm, and there! Oh, if it be so that with its abatement they may at once escape to sea, all will go well. Yet, I fear me, it is not so, else he, knowing his leader's wish, would show more anxiety to communicate with him. If they be wrecked, then Heaven shield them!"

CHAPTER XI.

The soft blue sky did never melt
Into his heart; he never felt
The witchery of the soft blue sky. Wordsworth.

It was indeed a fact that Pedro Polias was on the watch at the mouth of the narrow creek when Gaspar came back from his secret mission—watching with his armed boat's crew, for the Italian had got away in the barge and gone beyond his sight while he was in the cabin holding converse with Hark Cringle and his page.

Pedro was trying to learn where Gaspar had been, and what news he brought, for in his treacherous cunning he felt sure there was a secret, in which he meant to profit could it be learned.

He noted the course from which the barge of the Italian came, and when the oars of the latter could be no longer heard he muttered out his thoughts.

"He hath not been to sea—it is too rough out yonder yet for his boat to live. 'Tis rough indeed to cross the bay. Nor could he in this time have been to the creek where mine own swift sloop lieth at her moorings. That is too far away for the time that he hath used. Where can he have gone? For what was his voyage made?"

"Ah! a thought strikes me. Under its lee he could have reached Magnolia Key, and, landing there, discovered what I believe is the secret that Hark Cringle would not have the boy expose. Ay, the stranger is either wrecked upon the island or within its harbour seeks to repair the damages of storm and battle! 'Tis so. I see it now. Ha! ha! Pedro Polias is not so blind as they think him. I will be the first to pounce upon the prey. When the light of another day shines upon the water my 'Red-Handed Demon of the Sea' shall show her flag before the passage unto me so long well known. Then let Hark Cringle rave, for ere he can come to claim a share in the work I'll have the prize he failed to take; and, while the ground-sharks make banquet on the captured men, I'll once more listen to the music of despairing woman's shriek—for it is ever music to my ear to hear the cry for mercy when I feel most merciless! To your oars, my de-

mons, to your oars! We must on board our own swift craft, and to the work that is before us. Night throws her mantle in our path, and ere 'tis lifted by the roseate hand of bright Aurora we must be sweeping down on those who will least expect us. Away! away!"

Bending to their oars, the demon comrades of the fiendish man swept their boat out from its concealment on the night-wrapped waters, and sped fast away down towards the other side of the bay.

The hours of night sped on, but long before they were counted in the fleeting record of departing time Pedro Polias stood upon his own blood-stained deck, where, rousing all his crew, he told them that a prize, which had baffled even the One-armed Buccaneer, was, as he believed, within their reach. They would sail forth while yet the darkness hid their movements, and be before him in the capture, if, as he believed, the craft lay helpless in a harbour unto him well known.

Had he not commanded silence, joyous yells from many a throat might have alarmed his intended victims, but he had bidden all to be quiet.

Then, with sail hoisted carefully and even the binnacle shrouded so that only the helmsman could see the light which showed his compass course, the Spaniard stood out to sea, shaping his route so as to lay his craft in front of the island by the dawn of day.

The wind had died away until now it scarcely filled his sail, while the sea, not yet gone down, rocked his long hull to and fro, but when day approached the breeze grew a trifle stronger.

"Up with our flag and let the first glimpse of day show the signal which ever tells to friends and foes where Pedro Polias sails."

Thus cried the Spanish pirate, while the clouds in the East began to lighten with the day's approach.

When that day was near enough for eye to see the flag he named it looked upon a banner well calculated to strike terror into hearts which knew too well what pirates were.

It was a huge white flag, with the figure of a horned demon, black as night, upon it, stretching out hands of a blood-red hue, as if to seize a victim. And this gave the name by which so far and wide that sloop was known—"The Red-handed Demon of the Sea."

When day dawned, with this flag flying from her lofty mast, the sloop was bearing down towards Magnolia Key.

And, on her deck, over a hundred fiends in human shape, fit followers of the most cruel man of all that age, stood hungering for blood and plunder.

(To be continued.)



[THE IMPENDING FATE.]

THE THREE PASSIONS.

BY THE

Author of "Sweet Eglantine," "Evander," &c., &c.

CHAPTER III.

The ancient Hall before him lay.
The battlements, the turrets gray,
Seemed half abandoned to decay:
On barican and keep of stone
Stern Time the foeman's work had done:
In the rude guard-room, where of yore
Their weary hours the warders wore,
Now, while the cheerful faggots blaze,
On the paved floor the spindle plays;
The flanking guns dismounted lie,
The moat is ruinous and dry,
The grim portcullis gone—and all
The fortress turned to peaceful hall.

Scott.

GRACE EBURY did not doubt that Anthony Dalton, the pilot, had some purpose of his own to serve in promoting a marriage between herself and Tottenham; what that purpose was she did not stop to inquire. It was enough for her that she had ambitious ideas, and that he had shown her how to realize them.

There was little doubt that the young and handsome sailor who had been as it were adopted by Solomon Tulse would be his heir. To whom else could the old man leave the many thousands he had amassed in the course of an adventurous life?

The members of his family—notably Sir Harry Daubarn and Cecil Ives, with others more distant—had treated him as if he were an inferior, with whom it would be derogatory to their dignity to associate; and Solomon Tulse's pride forbade him to forgive such treatment as that to which he had been subjected.

The marriage between the young people had been projected and arranged by Dalton before Tottenham started on his last voyage to San Francisco. He had settled that the wedding should be privately solemnized at St. Heliers, and the sailor had prayed for favourable winds to bring him safely and quickly home to his young and blushing bride.

She cared not for the obscurity of his birth. It was little matter to her that he did not know his father, for she was well aware that the world is full of enjoyment for those who are rich, and that the tolling, struggling millions will forgive much to a man who has both hands full of money.

Young as she was and inexperienced in the ways of the world she was satisfied that the only path to the greatness she coveted was a golden one. Her ambition was to be courted, fêted, admired—to be

a leader of fashion, and to hear her name extolled above all others in the fashionable and exclusive circles of London life.

How difficult this was she had yet to learn.

To say that she loved Tottenham would be advancing too much. No girl can help admiring a good-looking man, but admiration and love are wide apart.

Sir Harry Daubarn had made no impression upon her, and if he had done so she would still have rejected him because he was comparatively poor.

If there was any one who had paid her attentions which she regarded favourably, it was Sir Harry's cousin, Mr. Cecil Ives.

Dalton had said it would be easy to keep the marriage a secret, and Tottenham, who was madly in love with Grace, was in the humour to listen to any proposition which would enable him to enjoy the society and the affection of one whom he deemed incomparable.

Her mother had closed the shop and retired to her bed-room when Grace returned. She hastily packed up a few things in a small bag, and wrote a letter which she left upon the table, informing Mrs. Ebury that she was going to spend a few days with some friends at Ramsgate.

Scarcely had she completed her preparations when the door of the little room at the back of the shop in which she had been writing opened, and Mrs. Ebury made her appearance. She was a woman of little or no mind. Plodding and industrious, she had established a good business, which her integrity and carefulness in money matters had enabled her to derive a good income from. But, in spite of her industry, she had no talent for managing her daughter, who controlled her entirely by sheer force of will and intellect.

Mrs. Ebury hoarded money, and lived in the plainest manner in order to save. Grace experienced some difficulty in obtaining from her large sums for dress—the gratification of her vanity by the adornment of her person being a paramount idea in her mind.

"What is the meaning of this?" inquired Mrs. Ebury, with some slight show of maternal authority.

"Read that letter, mamma, and you will know," answered Grace, without exhibiting the least uneasiness, though her mother's sudden and unexpected appearance was untoward.

Mrs. Ebury read the letter and said:

"It is odd that I should not have heard of this. Was an invitation sent you by post from our friends at Ramsgate?"

"I have had no invitation. You shall have the truth, only for my sake you must not divulge it to our

neighbours. I am going away to-night to raise myself in the social scale by marrying a gentleman who will have more thousands of pounds than you could count in a day or a week for that matter!"

"To marry!" repeated Mrs. Ebury, aghast.

"Have you ever thought of my future, mother?" continued Grace, who was always very much in earnest when she used the word "mother." "I am eighteen, and the life of privation which I have led has made me wish to be rich."

"I don't know why you should say that, my dear child," answered Mrs. Ebury, in a plaintive voice. "I have done all that lay in my power for you. In this house you have enjoyed all the comforts that my means placed within my reach and yours. As for dress I feel certain that no girl in Deal in your position has had finer clothes. Why then this discontent? You must be mad to grumble at your lot."

"Look at me," said Grace; "have I the air of any one who is mad? Believe me when I say that I know perfectly well what I am about—my future is in my own hands now, and I must not neglect the chance."

"But, my dear girl, reflect," said Mrs. Ebury, from whose eyes tears began to flow. "This is ingratitude of the basest kind. Will you not make me your confidant? Who is it you are going to marry? Who is this rich man, who, by contracting an alliance with you, will enable you to accomplish such wonders?"

"I cannot go into particulars, because I cannot trust you," rejoined Grace; "moreover, there is no time for long explanations. I am late already. I intend to do nothing wrong, that you may rely upon, and when I come back I will tell you everything. If any friend should inquire where I am, show my letter, that will be sufficient."

"Ah, Grace," said Mrs. Ebury, with a deep sigh, "you were always a headstrong girl, and I have feared that your irrepressible love of dress and display would some day lead you into trouble. This is a bad reward for all my kindness to you—see how I deprived myself of money to educate you."

"I will return all your favours, mother," said Grace, with some gentleness, "and you shall have no cause to complain, for the return shall be tenfold. At present, good night!"

She shook her mother by the hand, and, taking up the bag, she left the house.

Mrs. Ebury had not the courage or the strength to follow her. She was like one petrified. Though Grace had given symptoms of being flighty, and was undoubtedly vain and fond of dress, she had never expected that she would venture to take such a bold

step as to go away secretly to get married without letting her know anything about the man of her choice.

Grace shut the door quietly behind her and walked towards the railway station. She had not gone far before a man emerged from the shadow of a doorway and followed her.

He took the centre of the street, so that he might see her well, and, crossing, he put himself by her side, saying:

"Women are never in too much of a hurry to make a start or to keep an appointment."

It was Tony Dalton.

"We shall have to make haste or we shall miss the train, and to do that would be to miss the good ship 'Asphodel,' which would make a very pretty kettle of fish."

"I hope I haven't been too long," said Grace, who did not think it advisable to make him acquainted with her interview with her mother. "The fact is, my dear old friend, that I waited until the last moment, so that I should not meet any of my friends or neighbours. It does not look well to be seen out alone at this time of night."

They hurried along and were in time to catch the train. When they were comfortably seated in a second-class carriage, which they had all to themselves, the pilot lighted his pipe, which was made of clay and as black as a coal, and, throwing himself back in his seat, exclaimed:

"Let us talk a little about matters which intimately concern us both."

"With pleasure," replied Grace, whose face was lit up with a flush of excitement, the result of the adventure in which she had embarked.

"I have selected you as the wife for 'Tottenham,'" he continued, "because you are a strong-minded woman and one who will carry out an idea when it is once put into your head. But I do not work without a hope of reward."

"You shall have what money you require out of the thousands my husband will bring me," she replied.

"You will get into good society and have an acquaintance with people of position, and you must exert your influence on my behalf, as there is an important post in the Customs which I want. I am tired of being Dalton the pilot, who simply takes ships up the river, and it is to you I look to enable me to spend the remainder of my days in peace and comfort."

"I will do all you require," Grace said. "Depend upon me; I never forget a friend or forgive an enemy."

"That is right!" said Dalton, in a commendatory tone; "you have the right spirit, and I am more than ever persuaded that I have made a good choice. With Tottenham you will be happy, because he loves you, and you will be able to do what you like with him, though I know that in your heart of heart you prefer the dashing, well-bred, and gentlemanly Cecil Ives, who has broken more hearts than I can count on my ten fingers."

Grace Ebury became deathly pale.

"Do not, for goodness' sake, talk like that," she said. "Why do you try to analyse my feelings? Is it not enough that I have consented to marry your friend?"

"Oh!" exclaimed Anthony Dalton, with a cunning smile, "I only mentioned it that you might know I should have some hold over you if you did not keep faith with me. I picked up a pocket-book of Mr. Ives's on the beach one night last winter, which contained some letters in your handwriting, and if Tottenham saw them the circumstance might destroy your domestic happiness, that's all."

"My letters—to Mr. Ives! Show them to me!" gasped Grace.

"They're safe enough, my dear; do not be alarmed, you have nothing to fear," replied Dalton, calmly.

Grace said no more, but was very quiet and reserved during the remainder of the journey, which we must leave her to perform with her companion while we pay a visit to Sea View, the seat of Mr. Solomon Tulse, to gain possession of whose money was the object of more intriguing than we have at present revealed to the reader.

Sea View was distant from Deal about five miles, situated on the top of a hill, looking over the ocean, dotted with innumerable ships bringing up their varied merchandize to London, that port of the world. On each side and in the rear were trees protecting it from the wind.

The house itself was old, half hall, half fortress, and one could almost fancy its having defied the attacks of the Danes in long years gone by. A flag-staff, with many ropes, resembling the ordnance of a ship, reared its giddy head upon the lawn, and a Union Jack fluttered proudly in the breeze.

It was here that Mr. Solomon Tulse lived.

His life was that of a recluse, as we have said, for

he rarely entertained any one, and steadily refused to accept invitations to the houses of the gentry in the neighbourhood.

He loved to wander over his land, beneath the shade of the rugged oaks and gnarled elms, or to sweep the horizon with his glass, when the sea was still and calm, though a tempest had charms for him, and his soul seemed to harmonize with the raging elements when the waves, storm-tossed, broke in savage fury against the rocks at his feet.

That he was a sad man, brooding over a melancholy past, every one said, though none—not even Dalton the pilot—knew the cause of his grief. The only being who made his soul light up with a brief gleam of pleasure—so fleeting and unusual as to be the more marked—was Tottenham, the son of his adoption, whom he had brought from London, and named "Walter"—a name which was lost among the people of Deal, who had nick-named him "Tottenham" and would call him nothing else.

Solomon was growing old now, and his solitary life told upon him. Those who saw the aged man, with long white hair, supporting himself on a stick, hobbling moodily along, shook their heads, saying "he had not long to last."

The night before Grace Ebury went with Dalton to Jersey to be married, Solomon Tulse received a shock which seriously attacked his nervous system.

He had his superstitions.

When he was a sailor, navigating his own vessels, he declared that he had twice seen a phantom ship—once off the Cape of Storms, again in the Indian Ocean—and the appearance of those spectral craft had been followed by terrible misfortunes; his ship had been wrecked, and he escaped with his life only by a miracle. It was his firm belief that if he saw a phantom again a third time he should die within ten days of the ill-omened apparition.

Walking on the cliff on the night in question, he had beheld, almost at his feet, a small cutter bounding through the waves with all sails set. The wind blowing towards the shore, she went dangerously close to the rocks, but, obedient to some invisible hand, she escaped destruction just at the time it seemed most imminent. Not a soul could be seen on board; she was deserted, and if she had not been of the phantom kind she must have been dashed to pieces on the iron-bound coast.

The old man returned to his home firmly convinced that in ten days he would die.

Ponder, the steward at Sea View, and Ellis, the valet, attendant, and letter writer—two men more in the confidence of their master than any of the other servants—were well aware of his idiosyncrasy. They knew that he feared the apparition, and he told them that he had seen it.

The evening was agreeably cool after a hot day—one of many—and a slight breeze had sprung up which was very grateful.

In the kitchen of the old hall—a spacious apartment—were congregated the domestics of the establishment, drinking cider and chatting together.

"Master has been very fidgety lately," exclaimed Ponder the steward. "He has sent Dabchick again to the town to see if any tidings can be gathered of the 'Asphodel'; she is long over-due. If he has opened the window of his study once since the lad has been gone he has done so twenty times."

"Yes," said Ellis, "and he has reason. You forget he has seen the phantom ship!"

The two men exchanged significant glances.

"Is he right in his head, do you think?" asked the gardener.

"Oh, it is not a delusion!" answered Ellis; "we too saw it. Ponder and I were out walking, and we saw a craft that was deserted fore and aft, and it must have been wrecked had not some supernatural agency been at work to preserve it."

"The master is altered already," remarked the footman. "I who wait upon him always can see it with half an eye; at his age he may be expected to go off at any moment, then what is to become of us?"

"That's the question; we must wait till Mr. Walter Tottenham comes home," said Ellis. "He has made his will, for I helped him to do so, and, though all of us are remembered slightly, the larger portion of his property goes to Walter. As for Sir Harry Daubarn and Mr. Ives, they get something, but nothing much."

The conversation continued and grew animated, for most of the servants had been some time in their places, and the prospect of a death held out the chance of a change which was not agreeable.

Rising, Ponder made a sign to Ellis, who, without a word, followed his example, and they left the room together, entering the courtyard. They crossed over by the stables, and through a doorway in the wall gained a lane which took them out on to the cliffs.

"We can talk here," said Ellis, "without being overheard."

"I shall be glad, because I want to know all about

your arrangements," answered Ponder; "in the first place what about the phantom ship?"

"I arranged that with Watkins the fisherman, after a consultation with Sir Harry Daubarn, who is in love with Grace Ebury. She will not marry him because he is poor, and he wants the master's money. We gave Watkins five pounds for the job. He painted the ship black, and, setting sail, lay down where he could not be seen, but in a position which enabled him to pull the rudder-lines and see which way to steer. I had heard Mr. Tulse speak so often of the phantom ship he had twice seen that I knew the apparition would affect him, and it was I who induced him to go for a walk when I knew Watkins would be at work."

"Sir Harry is the old man's heir if he should die without a will, is he not?"

"Certainly, but a will is made."

"You are sure of that?" said Ponder.

"Perfectly," replied Ellis.

"In that case Sir Harry Daubarn has all his trouble and expense for nothing."

"Not at all," said Ellis, in a significant voice. "Sir Harry thinks he will die intestate. All he wants is the old man's death and as soon as possible. We are helping him to that end. Shortly we will go in search of the will, which is amongst his papers in the study, and, having got it into our possession, we can sell it to Sir Harry for a good price; he will be in a hurry to burn it, and we shall have made a provision for ourselves as long as we live. That is my plan."

"I am with you, and approve of it," responded the steward; "but do you believe he is as rich as they say? In the town I have heard the sailors and people talking about him, and they declare that barrels of gold are hidden somewhere in the vaults under the hall."

"That is absurd. The gold exists, but it is not here."

"Where then?"

"That cannot be known until Mr. Tulse dies."

"If we get the will, we are to divide the money Sir Harry will give us for it?" said Ponder.

"Yes. In equal shares."

"How do you know?" continued the steward, "that all the money is left to Tottenham? It seems odd to me."

"For this reason. Dalton came to dine with the master some two years ago, and after dinner the wine made them talkative. They forgot my presence, for I was at the sideboard, decanting some port in your absence. Dalton is a man Mr. Tulse has great confidence in, and when he asked master what he intended to do with all his money he said he had left it to Tottenham. These were his words: 'When I am dead he will find a letter addressed to him, which will give him full directions to enable him to discover my money.'"

"That looks as if he had a buried treasure."

"We shall know when we get the will and the letter, and the seizure must be made just at the critical moment, when he is getting worse and the doctor shakes his head. If the sight he has already had of the phantom ship is not enough, Watkins shall give him another."

"When we get home let me have a little bit of writing to exchange, so that one shall not cheat the other," said Ponder, who feared that Ellis's genius for intrigue was greater than his own.

"As you will. It is a precaution which will be satisfactory to both," replied Ellis, with an air of unconcern. "There is one thing though we must both be prepared for."

"And that is?"

"If Tottenham returns sooner than we expect, and he stands in our own way, he must go—"

Ponder became deathly pale and trembled.

"Do you speak of murder?" he asked.

"Think what you like, but don't make use of ugly words. I want to live a life of ease and independence, and if this Master Walter stands in my way he must be removed; is that intelligible to you?"

"I cannot commit a crime."

"Leave that to me," said Ellis, who was unscrupulous in the extreme. "If a crime is necessary, I would not trust its execution to you for the world, you are far too weak, and would make some dreadful blunder, which would bring both our necks into jeopardy. All you have to do is to work with me, hold your tongue, and give me the entire management of everything."

Ponder acquiesced, and they in a few minutes reached Sea View.

As they entered the yard Dabchick, the stable lad, dashed up at full gallop, crying at the top of his voice:

"The 'Asphodel' has been signalled. It is all right. Hurrah for Tottenham!"

The two men looked blankly at one another. These words of hope and encouragement reached the ears

of the poor, decrepit old man in his study, the window of which was open, and in a voice tremulous with emotion he murmured:
 "Heaven grant that I may live a few days yet. When I have seen Walter I shall die contented."

CHAPTER IV.

It is the bright day that brings forth the adder;
 And that craves wary walking.

Put a tongue
 In every word of Caesar, that should move
 The stones of Rome to rise and mutiny.

Julius Caesar.

FORTY-EIGHT hours afterwards the ship "Asphodel" cast anchor off Deal, in which little town there was some commotion, all the sailors on board belonging to the place, and it being feared, from her being longer out than usual, that she might have gone to the bottom.

A number of people were at the "Clock House," among them Sir Harry Daubarn and Mr. Cecil Ives, his cousin, who had been amusing themselves by playing at billiards in a room upstairs.

When they heard from the conversation around them that the "Asphodel" had arrived Cecil Ives took up a telescope, and, leaning against the window, looked out upon the sea.

He saw a tall, handsome youth, dressed as a superior officer of a merchant vessel, step into a boat, manned by six sailors, who began to row her to the land.

Turning to his cousin, he said:

"Will you step down to the beach with me?"

"If you like; what is going on there to interest us?" replied Sir Harry Daubarn.

"You heard me say that Grace Ebury had a lover?"

"Yes," replied Sir Harry, eagerly.

"Come with me and I will show him to you."

"But how—"

"Listen to me," interrupted Cecil Ives. "Two years ago I had a passing fancy for the same girl, who did not seem indifferent to what few charms for a woman's eyes I may possess. It was by discovering that she flirted with a sailor that I gave her up. The ship 'Asphodel,' belonging to our eccentric relation Tulse, is in harbour, a boat has just put off, and as my late and your present rival is in that boat we—"

"Do you mean Walter Tottenham as they call him, old Tulse's adopted son?" cried Sir Harry, unable to restrain his impatience.

"That is the identical person."

Cecil Ives regarded his cousin pitilessly, and remarked that he grew pale with astonishment and rage mingled together.

They continued their way to the beach in silence, and were just in time to join an enthusiastic crowd waiting to welcome the arrival of Tottenham, who shook hands with his friends, his face beaming with pleasure.

The lad from Sea View was waiting with a led horse to accompany him to the old man who longed so for his coming, but his friends would not let him take his departure until he had imbibed at least one glass of champagne.

He walked the centre of the throng to the "Clock House," explaining that he was now captain of the "Asphodel," the former master having died of yellow fever, and he was again congratulated.

Having drunk some champagne, he sprang on the back of the led horse, and, waving his hand, cried:

"I will join you to-night, my friends, and we will have a chat about old times."

Then he gave the horse the rein, and started at a quick pace for Sea View.

Sir Harry Daubarn and Cecil Ives looked after him as he galloped up the street, both their faces dark with envy and displeasure.

They were startled by the appearance of a little man dressed in black; his frock coat was open, displaying a heavy watch chain, his face was hard and stern, with a cunning expression. He had the air of one who is well off and has some authority. This was Mr. Lardock, of the firm of Lardock and Rendall, solicitors. Rendall was dead, though his name was retained in the firm by Lardock, who had acquired the reputation of having a good knowledge of law and being a man whose word and advice could be relied upon.

"Soh!" he exclaimed. "I have met you on your way to my office, I presume, gentlemen?"

"I was about to bring Mr. Ives there," rejoined Sir Harry, recovering himself from the reverie into which he had fallen, "though I have not yet explained my reason for wishing him to accompany me."

"We are isolated here—let us talk, and excuse me if I at once speak of your relation, Mr. Solomon Tulse," said Lardock. "You are aware, Mr. Ives, that, if Mr. Tulse die without a will, your cousin and

yourself will divide his property, as you are equally related. The property here is not worth much; but he has a quarter, perhaps half a million of money hidden away somewhere."

"Do you believe that fable?" said Cecil Ives, with an incredulous smile.

"I have no doubt of it. I know it, in short, to be a fact!" rejoined the lawyer, emphatically.

Cecil Ives started, while Lardock continued:

"Sir Harry and I are of opinion that it would be wrong to allow an old man, partly imbecile, to rob his relations, for it is no secret to me that he intends to leave all, or nearly all, to this young man, Walter Tottenham, who is nobody knows who."

"How can it be prevented?" asked Cecil Ives.

"In more ways than one. If you will join the league that Sir Harry Daubarn and I have instituted we will admit you to our councils and deliberations. Three heads are better than two," answered Mr. Lardock, with a smile.

"I am with you hand and glove," cried Cecil Ives. "Goodness knows my wretched income, like my cousin's, is not large enough to make me scrupulous."

"So far so good. We have two friends already in the enemy's camp. Ponder, the steward, and Ellis, the valet, secretary, etc."

"I should prefer to leave such fellows out," said Mr. Ives, with a smile of contempt.

"We could do but little without them, as you will admit when you know all. If, however, you prefer the whole of your relative's immense fortune—for it is immense—to go to Tottenham, say so, and we will endeavour to achieve our ends unaided!"

These words made Cecil Ives's eyes flash with a fierce hatred.

"You are right!" he exclaimed. "All arms are useful in warfare. I am with you. Lead the way to your office, and take me entirely into your confidence, so that I may know in what way I can contribute my share of service to the league."

"Follow me," rejoined Lardock.

He conducted the cousins to the high street, and, pushing back a green baize door bearing a brass plate on which was written "Messrs. Lardock and Rendall, Solicitors," he ushered them into his office.

While his enemies were busily engaged in plotting against his happiness and his future, possibly his life, Walter Tottenham continued to ride swiftly to Sea View, impatient to clasp his benefactor by the hand and inquire respecting his health.

Though Dabchick would have been delighted to see him draw rein and enter into conversation he did not slacken speed. The lad was devoted to Walter, and his highest ambition was to go to sea with and to sail under his orders.

At length Walter was obliged to allow his horse to go more slowly as he neared a very dangerous turning in the road known as Satan's Foot.

The way grew narrower, and one unacquainted with it ran a great danger, for if one went straight on there was but a weak wooden railing to prevent one from falling over a tremendous precipice, at the bottom of which the sea broke in white foam over the jagged rocks. The road turned sharp round to the left and went on through the open country again.

When this awkward corner was passed Walter again galloped, giving one look at the rock, which sloped down until it took somewhat the shape of a foot, from which peculiarity the gully derived its name of Satan's Foot.

Covered with dust and perspiration from his ride in the hot sun, Walter Tottenham reigned up his horse in the courtyard, and, throwing the bridle to the lad, hastened into the house, making his way at once to the study, where he knew he should find his friend and benefactor.

The old man's face lighted up as he beheld the welcome guest; he grasped his hand warmly, and motioned him to a seat.

"I am happy since you have arrived," he said, "because my days are numbered, and I longed to talk to you before I died."

"Oh, no, sir!" rejoined Walter, who always addressed him with respect. "You are frightening yourself without just reason. You will live many years yet."

Solomon Tulse shook his head.

"I have had a warning which I cannot disregard. I am old, but it is not about my health that I wished to speak," he said. "You must have heard that I am rich—very rich?"

"Men have told me so," rejoined Walter.

"They told you the truth. I have three hundred and fifty thousand pounds."

"That is enormous!" said Walter, in a tone of admiration.

"Do you know to whom this money will go at my death?" continued the old man.

Walter could not help trembling. He made no

reply, but with downcast eyes awaited a fresh communication.

"It is not likely that you should," Solomon Tulse went on. "But I will tell you. It will go to my son."

At this announcement Walter became deeply interested, and, looking up, gazed at his benefactor with a curious stare.

Mr. Tulse did not appear to notice his agitation. He said, after a slight pause:

"I have a son, to whom I have been cruelly unjust, whom I drove from my sight, and who ought to hate me, for he did not deserve the treatment to which I subjected him."

This speech held out no hope to Tottenham of his acquiring the thousands of Solomon Tulse. At his age one is seldom mercenary, and he did not feel the loss. He had a young and handsome wife whom he loved, for the marriage had taken place at St. Heliers, and he did not know that a loss of the expected fortune would make any difference in his domestic happiness and her feelings towards him. All he felt at that supreme moment was thankfulness that he was not Solomon Tulse's son. It seemed to him that his mother's honour and fair fame were vindicated, and that he was not the child of shame as his enemies had sometimes rudely implied.

"You will do well, sir, to render justice to your son," he contrived to say, in a dry voice.

"It will smoothe my passage to another world. But listen well to what I am going to say," exclaimed Tulse; "you will hear what is a secret to every one. Not even my old friend the pilot, Dalton—no one in Europe, in fact—knows anything whatever about this passage in my early life. When in India I fell in love with a princess and married her, living happily with her for some years. I used to make journeys to Europe, and always came back to my wife with renewed contentment. I had one son. Seven years after our union my wife died, and I took considerable pains to educate my son worthily. We lived in Lahore. One night some one came into my room, which contained a box in which were diamonds of great value. But my breath fails me; I cannot tell you all."

Solomon Tulse made a gesture, and, interpreting it aright, Walter rolled a small table towards him.

"Open that desk in which the key stands," said Tulse. "In the third drawer to the left you will find three large envelopes, tied with red tape."

"Are these the ones?" asked Walter, obeying the instructions and holding up some letters.

Tulse answered by an inclination of the head.

Placing them on the table, Walter awaited the recommencement and continuation of this singular history.

The first letter was marked "1," and on it was written—"History of my Life." The second was marked "2," and bore the direction "To Solomon Tulse, Khan Bahadur, London, England," and bore the Madras postmark. The third was marked "3," and was thus inscribed—"To my adopted son, James Evans, called Walter Tottenham."

"You see here," exclaimed Tulse, whose voice grew perceptibly weaker, "a history of my life. It is for you to open when I am dead, which I soon shall be. You will then know all that it is necessary for you to know, which I am now unable to relate. Do you understand?"

There were tears in Walter's eyes as he replied in the affirmative.

"Now read that letter," continued Mr. Tulse.

He indicated the one which bore the direction, "To Solomon Tulse, Khan Bahadur," and Walter broke the seal and read as follows:—

"Sahib,—My end is drawing near, and I cannot die without clearing my stained soul by a full confession. Your son Syed is innocent. Knowing that you had diamonds of price in your sleeping apartment, I stole to your room in the night, having, to mislead you, previously put on a robe of your son's. You were disturbed, and, springing from the bed, endeavoured to detain me. To effect my escape I inflicted that stab with a dagger which enabled me to withdraw, leaving my cashmere robe in your hands. You attributed the crime to your son, and, after striking, banished him from your presence. I alone was guilty. Make amends to Syed, the best of men, and forgive me my villany, as I hope Allah will pardon me after death."

"From your slave, ALI AKBAR."

"Is that comprehensible to you?" asked Tulse.

"Perfectly," replied Walter.

"I received that letter, as you will perceive by the date, about three years ago, and since then I have made continued efforts to find my son and render reparation for my injustice, but I cannot trace him. In my will, which is in the fourth drawer to the left of the desk, I have declared that Sea View and the land belonging shall be divided between my relations, heirs-at-law, viz., Sir Harry Daubarn and Mr. Cecil

Ives, always provided that my son Syed does not appear to claim the said property within six years of my death."

Though not avaricious or mercenary, Walter felt depressed, for as yet no mention of him had been made.

A smile came to the lips of the old man, who added:

"You have not heard what I intend to do with my personality—my three hundred and fifty thousand pounds."

The young man breathed again.

"There are fools about here—and Dalton the pilot is one of them—who believe that I have buried my gold in cellars. What is the use of that? Will buried money bring its possessor any interest? Not one halfpenny. My money is invested in stock of the Honourable East India Company, and since first placed there has nearly doubled itself. I have given the secretary a copy of an order, the original of which is in the third envelope addressed to you. It runs as follows: 'To the secretary of the Honourable East India Company. Pay to the bearer at sight all the money standing to my credit, after sale at price current of stock held by me in shares of the Honourable East India Company.' Then comes my usual signature, and the secretary has agreed to honour the draft whenever it is brought to him."

"No matter by whom?"

"No matter by whom," responded Solomon Tulse. "Although I have given you an order there is another, which I posted to Calcutta, addressed to Syed Shah Jehan. It was sent a fortnight ago, and to Calcutta because I heard a vague report from the India Office that he was in that city."

"Why give one to me and send another to Calcutta? The one presented first will be paid," said Walter, who was unable to understand this complication.

"Wait and I will endeavour to explain," replied Mr. Tulse, whose pulse grew weaker, and his voice faltered a little. "Come nearer."

Walter Tottenham, who for the first time learnt from the inscription on the letter that his real name was James Evans, went as close as he could to the old man, and, sitting by his side, listened to his farther remarks, which from increasing infirmity were made almost under his breath.

It was dark when Walter heard his last words, and rose to walk impatiently up and down the room. Then he took the three letters—the history of a life, the letter of Ali, and the important one containing advice and the order on the East India Company—and placed them in the breast-pocket of his coat as being the safest receptacle for them he could find.

At that moment Ponder the steward got up from a painful position he had assumed in the vicinity of the study in which the interview had taken place. He had placed himself near the window, which was open, and had consequently overheard much that had been said. He had scarcely gone a dozen paces along the garden when he met Ellis, who had walked quickly from Deal, whither he had been.

"Well," said Ponder, in a low tone, "what news?"

"Mr. Lardock has taken upon himself to act without consulting either Sir Harry or Mr. Ives—but first of all what have you heard?"

"A good deal; but the old fellow spoke too low. I can scarcely understand what he said. This is clear—he has three hundred and fifty thousand pounds; where it is I could not find out, though he has given Tottenham a letter, telling him where to find it, and he has left it to his son, which of course is Tottenham."

"Precisely."

It will be seen that Ponder had not overheard sufficient to enable him to grasp the facts, and he had to some extent misled himself.

"Listen to me," said Ellis. "Bend down. I will whisper what Lardock wants done."

He whispered in his companion's ear for nearly five minutes.

"Oh!" cried Ponder, "that's easy. There is my old fowling-piece, and I can find plenty of cord in the pantry."

"Hush! Not so loud!" rejoined Ellis, laying his finger on his lips to indicate the necessity for caution.

Taking the butler's arm, he led him through the shrubbery, and they quickly disappeared among the evergreens.

"Now," said Solomon Tulse, "go back to the town and spend a few hours with your companions. I have a presentiment that I shall be dead in the morning, and that you will not see me again."

"Do not give way to such gloomy anticipations. You will be well to-morrow. You have been better since I arrived," answered Walter.

"I cannot deceive myself. However, do not let my condition spoil your engagement. You have the

documents; keep them safe, and remember all I have said to you. Take a horse and hasten to Deal, but as it is a dark night be careful how you pass Satan's Foot."

"Never fear," replied Walter.

"Ah! but should your horse shy or miss his footing?"

"I am a sailor, but I can ride, sir!" answered Walter.

There was an affectionate parting, and in five minutes Walter was hastening back to Deal, galloping as fast as his horse would go. He was impatient to join his friends at the "Clock House," where he expected to see the pilot Dalton, who would give him news of his beloved Grace.

The night was dark, though the stars shone clear over head, but there was no moon.

Walter Tottenham, or James Evans, thought of Grace, and became totally oblivious of the dangers of the road. If the horse had been left to himself he would have turned the corner at Satan's Foot, for he knew the way, but suddenly there was a detonation and a vivid flash, which occurred just as the angle of the road was reached. The horse trembled, and, taking the bit between its teeth, dashed straight on.

Walter endeavoured to restrain it, but without success.

Terribly frightened—maddened, in fact—it reached the wooden palings. Those should have stopped its furious career, but a gap had been made in them, through which it passed.

The next moment it trod upon nothing and rolled down the abyss.

A terrible cry of despair came piercingly forth from those dread depths.

It was Tottenham who cried, his very soul seeming to be poured out in the compressed agony of that awful death shriek.

(To be continued.)

LIFE'S SHADOWS.

CHAPTER XXXI.

WITH all his bravado, Todhelly was a coward. He had wantonly insulted a defenceless girl, believing her to be low-born, and therefore not entitled to the courtesy or consideration of a "gentleman" like himself. He had the loose principles—or want of principle—peculiar to many gay young army officers, and had never hesitated to kiss a pretty face wherever he found it, whenever the social rank of its owner was considerably beneath his own. His amazement and rage at thus being brought to book by Sir Victor Cheswick for his gross insult to Tessa Holm were therefore excessive. He glared at the young baronet with an angry defiance, and his lips trembled, but he did not speak.

Tessa made a movement to retreat towards the coppice gate.

"Be kind enough to wait one moment, miss," said Sir Victor Cheswick, with chivalrous courtesy, bowing his grand young head to her. "I am sure Mr. Todhelly intends to apologize for his cowardly attack upon you."

Todhelly's coarse lips curled in a sneer.

"Perhaps, Sir Victor," he said, "you don't know who the girl is. You mistook her for a lady, I dare say, whereas she is in reality only Miss Holm, my cousin's governess, and of low birth—"

Sir Victor Cheswick's noble face flushed with a generous indignation.

"Coward!" he cried, sternly. "Miss Holm is a lady, and you will do well to make your apologies to her this instant. Have you no respect for your mother's memory that you so wantonly insult one of her sex? Have you no reverence for the name of woman?—no regard for the helpless? Apologize, before I force you to your knees!"

The stern, authoritative voice left the burly squire no alternative. He dared not disobey that command, backed as it was by the flashing eyes and alert, commanding figure of the young baronet.

"I—I—since you insist upon it, Sir Victor," he stammered, "I apologize. But really the girl—"

"Not another word, sir!" interrupted Sir Victor.

"You can go."

He pointed with his riding-whip towards the Grange. Todhelly retreated a few steps in that direction, his countenance fairly livid, and a dangerous light gleaming in his eyes.

"I will go," he said; "but this affair does not end here, Sir Victor Cheswick. I allow no man to humble me with impunity. I will settle with you hereafter. As to the girl, I have not done with her yet."

He bestowed a threatening glance on the young baronet and on Tessa, then beat a hasty retreat towards the Grange.

"You are not alarmed at the fellow's threats, I hope, Miss Holm," said the handsome young

baronet, slipping his arm through his horse's bridle and approaching nearer to Tessa. "There is a homely old adage to the effect that 'barking dogs seldom bite,' and another that 'threatened people live long.' I don't doubt that Todhelly would do both you and me an injury if he could, but he will probably lack the opportunity."

"He can deprive me of my situation," said Tessa, sorrowfully. "Mrs. Gwynne is his cousin. But I did not mean to utter any complaint," and she blushed vividly. "I thank you for your noble and timely defence of me, Sir Victor, and I hope that no trouble to you will ever grow out of our chance meeting."

"I am not afraid of any," said Sir Victor, cheerfully. "But I hope that our acquaintance, so strangely begun, will not end here. I will give myself the pleasure of calling at Heathstead to-morrow, to hear if this morning's excitement has had any injurious effect upon you. I am a Devonshire man, Miss Holm, but I have a box in this neighbourhood, where I have been stopping for the past month, with the exception of a few days I spent in London."

The young man walked with Tessa to the gate of the coppice, and the pair stood there in the cool dim shadows of the firs and pines, and talked, forgetful of their surroundings, until the gay voices of the twin girls approaching them aroused them.

Both started and blushed as Marah and Sarah came bounding along the Ghost's Walk, but Sir Victor did not hasten his leave-taking. He greeted the two girls politely, Tessa effecting an introduction, and after a little while made his adieu, mounted, and rode away.

Tessa looked after him with a sigh.

He was so noble, so brave, so chivalrous, and had such an air of knightly courtesy, that his very presence seemed to give breadth and beauty to existence.

Tessa was very grave and silent as she turned from the coppice gate with her young charges, and walked slowly back in the gloom of the Ghost's Walk. The wind moaned among the pines above her head, but she did not even hear the weird and solemn music. A new element had entered into her life, strange thoughts were stirring in her young soul; and her heart was awakening to that emotion that links humanity to the divine. The child life was over for ever for Tessa Holm, and she stood upon the threshold of her woman's heritage—love!

The young baronet riding swiftly over the Dorset heaths carried with him the picture of a lovely, spirited face, framed in masses of golden hair and lighted by gray, soulful eyes—a face such as had haunted his dreams for years, and formed his highest ideal of womanly loveliness and beauty.

"I must see her again," he thought, a strange, yearning tenderness at his heart. "I wonder if she loves any one. I have a conviction that in her I have seen my future wife."

While he thus thought of her Tessa walked on over the thickly strewn pine needles so thoughtful that her charges proposed a return to the house. They turned off from the Ghost's Walk through a friendly gap in the hedge-like pines, and made their way slowly through the Squire's Coppice and across the lawn to the great red-brick mansion. They entered by a side door and went up to the school-room.

Tessa had scarcely removed her wrappings, and was warming herself at the school-room fire, when a servant entered with a message, demanding her immediate presence in Mrs. Gwynne's dressing-room.

The young governess obeyed the summons at once. Mrs. Gwynne, attired in a faded silk wrapper, with a volume lying open on her lap, was seated in an arm-chair near a pleasant fire. She did not rise at Tessa's entrance, but looked at her with a countenance expressive of cool displeasure.

"Be seated, Miss Holm," she said, waving her hand. "I desire a little conversation with you."

Tessa bowed and seated herself.

"I have just received a communication," said Mrs. Gwynne, severely, "which has terribly shocked me. If you can render any explanation, Miss Holm, you will do well to do so. One of the housemaids went to the top of the lawn, near where it joins the Squire's Coppice, a little while since, to deliver a message to one of the labourers. Hearing voices, she looked over the hedge and witnessed what she described to me as a 'shameless flirtation' between yourself and Squire Todhelly of the Grange. In fact, my cousin Todhelly seemed about to kiss you. The approach of a gentleman on horseback caused the maid to retire from the hedge, but her observations had been sufficiently complete."

"Now I wish to say that Todhelly—although he is my cousin, and I do not like to speak ill of the last representative of an old county family—is very wild and dissolute. He thinks nothing of snatching a kiss from a red-cheeked chambermaid or barmaid; but that the governess of my daughters should receive his Bacchanalian salutes, and encourage him in making them, is nearly incredible. If you have any—"

thing to say in your defence, Miss Holm, I should be pleased to hear it."

Mrs. Gwynne pursed up her full lips into a most disagreeable expression as she concluded, and composed herself into a waiting attitude.

"What I have to say in my self-defence, madam," said Tessa, her pure, proud face growing slightly haughty in its expression, "is to tell the simple truth. I stood at the end of the Ghost's Walk, in the open gateway by the road, when Squire Todthetly came up, and spoke to your daughter Sarah. Your daughter, at his request, introduced him to me. Sarah then ran away to join her sister in the coppice, and Squire Todthetly seized the opportunity to insult me by demanding a kiss. He said that you had informed him of my uncertain origin, and he thought my misfortune deprived me of all the consideration due to a lady. I tried to defend myself—"

"Of course," said Mrs. Gwynne, with an unlady-like sneer. "Of course you were not in fault, in your own estimation. But let me tell you, Miss Holm, that no man insults a woman who does not encourage his advances. No man ever insulted me," and she glanced at the reflection of her broad red face in an opposite mirror, with a smile of self-righteousness. "Had you conducted yourself with proper dignity and reticence, my cousin would not have offered to insult you, as you are pleased to term his action of this morning."

"The truth is, Miss Holm, the fault is in yourself. I have been grossly deceived in you. I expected Miss Lacy to send me a quiet, thoughtful girl of some five-and-twenty, past her girlish follies, and she sends me instead a coquettish, scheming creature, with a doll face and yellow hair. I don't doubt but that you produced that golden tinge to your hair with some of those Golden Waters they advertise so much. You needn't take the trouble to contradict me. You are utterly false, miss, and no doubt you are scheming to become mistress of the Grange! I think, in that case, that you will find that you have counted without your host."

Tessa's pale face flushed.

"Madam," she said, proudly, "you are doing me a fearful wrong. I suppose you will send me away from Heathstead, but I cannot go under a shadow that may darken all my future. Had your maid lingered a little longer at the hedge, she would have given you a very different report of the scene she partially witnessed. I repelled the shameful attack of Squire Todthetly. I would not suffer him to pollute my lips with his kiss. I fought him, madam, and when his strength would have overcome mine, a gentleman came up on horseback and engaged gallantly in my defence. He horsewhipped Mr. Todthetly—"

Mrs. Gwynne uttered a horrified shriek.

"What!" she cried, incredulously, her small eyes fairly emitting sparks. "Horsewhipped a Todthetly! Incredible!"

"The fact is as I have stated, madam," said Tessa, calmly. "The gentleman horsewhipped Mr. Todthetly, and compelled him to apologize to me—"

Mrs. Gwynne's rotund figure seemed to swell beyond the bounds of her chair. Her family pride was outraged. Her temper was inflamed.

"A 'Squire Todthetly, of the Grange,' horsewhipped!" she ejaculated. "Forced to apologize to my governess—a low-born, scheming minx, who had, no doubt, encouraged his advances! I can hardly believe my ears. Who, pray, was this gallant defender of yours, Miss Holm, if I may be allowed to ask?"

"He is a Devonshire baronet who has a house in the neighbourhood," said Tessa, quietly. "His name is Sir Victor Cheswick."

Mrs. Gwynne stared at her young governess with an ominous gaze.

"Sir Victor Cheswick!" she repeated. "I know of him, but am not personally acquainted with him."

She omitted to state that it was one of her social ambitions to become acquainted with the young baronet.

"So it was Sir Victor who horsewhipped Todthetly? No doubt you saw the young gentleman approaching, and gave your flirtation with the squire an aspect of persecution and resistance. I suppose you thought a handsome young baronet would be a greater catch than even a Todthetly. If you have formed any hopes in Sir Victor's direction you can conquer them immediately. Sir Victor Cheswick represents one of the best families in England, and has some grand connexions. He owns a castle down in Devonshire, and is enormously rich. He is a distant relative of the great Yorkshire nobleman, Lord Thornhurst, who is a marquise, and has for a wife the most splendidly beautiful woman in England. Do you think that such people would be on friendly terms with a low-born girl like you?"

"The question does not interest me, Mrs. Gwynne," said Tessa, with a sweet girlish dignity. "I shall never meet the Marquis and Marchioness of Thornhurst, and may never see Sir Victor

Cheswick again. I am not the scheming coquette you believe me. I did nothing to draw upon myself the insults of Squire Todthetly. The secret of that insult was the fact," and Tessa's pure cheeks flushed—"that he hated me no higher than some coquettish barmaid at some village inn. He believed that my low origin must involve a low mind. I behaved in all respects as a lady should. Believe me, madam," she entreated. "Indeed, indeed, I am incapable of an act unbecoming a lady!"

Mrs. Gwynne looked into the pure, high-bred face, and into the pleading, sorrowful eyes, but still clung to her incredulity and anger. She was of too coarse a mould to comprehend a nature so refined and lofty as Tessa's, and chose to consider her a manœuvring, scheming creature, bent upon securing for herself at an early day an eligible husband.

"We won't argue the point, Miss Holm," she said, coldly. "All that you can say will not alter my opinion of you. Of course, after the great scandal you have provoked, and after the degradation you have brought upon a Todthetly, my house cannot longer afford you shelter, nor can I expose my daughters to your pernicious company. I consider that Miss Lacy has greatly imposed upon me, and I shall send her a letter by to-night's post relating the particulars of this disgraceful affair. She shall learn the true nature of the creature she dared to praise to me as the most perfect and accomplished and noble girl in the whole world. I do not think she will venture to send forth another such glowing recommendation of you!"

"Miss Lacy knows me too well to believe evil of me," asserted Tessa, although her heart sank. "She will believe my word against all the seeming evidence that can be brought against me."

"Indeed! She will prefer your word to mine, perhaps," sneered Mrs. Gwynne. "You are insolent, girl. My theory that the lower classes should be kept uneducated and in their proper sphere has received confirmation from this disgraceful occurrence. I shall exact from my next governess a certificate of birth and social standing. You comprehend, Miss Holm, that your duties are ended in this house. I will pay you a month's salary in lieu of giving you a month's notice. The carriage will be at the door at five this afternoon to take you to Wimbor Minster. You may go."

She laid upon the table a small packet of gold and silver, comprising a month's salary, which she had counted out before summoning Tessa.

The girl rose, pale and haughty, and said, quietly: "I decline taking what I have not earned, madam. You send me away under a shadow that, as I said, may darken my whole future life. You refuse to credit my explanations, or to believe that there is any good in me. You wrong me cruelly. I am a poor girl, Mrs. Gwynne, and my good name is very dear to me. When you breathe a word against that, and ascribe to me motives of which I never dreamed, you do me a wicked wrong. I am dependent upon my own exertions, and struggling to pay a debt of obligation to one who has been my benefactor, and your pitiless hardness threatens to close to me the avenues of labour. If Miss Lacy turn from me, I shall not know what to do. But she will not turn from me," the girl added, confidently. "Heaven would not permit so terrible a wrong to one guiltless of wrong-doing. I go, and with one last word. Should Providence ever cast one of your daughters out upon a hard and misjudging world, I pray that she may find an employer more just to her than you have been to me. Good morning."

She inclined her head, and walked out of the room with the tread of a queen.

"I'm glad I've got rid of her," thought Mrs. Gwynne, uneasily. "I don't like her—she makes me feel so small. The insolence of supposing that one of my daughters might ever be a governess! She is altogether too high-strung to suit me. When Todthetly asked me so many questions about her this morning, and said that he thought her the most beautiful girl he had ever seen, I know I should not keep her the month out. What is it the men find so attractive in her big gray eyes and yellow hair? Todthetly and Gwynne both raved about her, calling her the 'little beauty.' It is my opinion that I have not got rid of the minx a minute too soon."

CHAPTER XXXII.

AFTER the humiliating scene by the coppice gate, and his abject apology to Tessa under compulsion, Squire Todthetly returned to the Grange, muttering imprecations upon Sir Victor Cheswick and Tessa Holm at every breath, and vowing by all that he held sacred to be "even" with them yet.

As he turned into his grounds and approached his house, he was met by Captain Holm, who was sauntering about in a state of ennui, and meditating seriously a return to town. There was not enough excitement at the Grange to suit him. Besides, he was impatient to be doing something towards the recovery of his lost daughter. He said

to himself that she would be a mine of wealth to him if once in his hands; but how was he to find her? The problem, from its very difficulty of solution, had an irresistible fascination for him.

"Hullo, Todthetly," he said as he met his host on the circular carriage sweep. "You got the start of me this morning. I intended to call with you at Heathstead upon the golden-haired angel; but it seems you were afraid I might out you out, so you slipped off alone. But what in the demon's name is the matter with your face? Your face and neck are covered with great livid streaks like blows."

"They are the marks of blows," said Todthetly, savagely. "I suppose you'll hear the story, so I may as well tell it to you. I went over to Heathstead to call on the 'golden-haired angel,' but she was out with the young ones. I heard her history, though, and it's deuced romantic. As I was coming home, the gate at the end of the Ghost's Walk, in the Squire's Coppice, opened, and out stepped my little lady, looking so bewitching that I asked her for a kiss—"

"By George! that was getting along fast on short acquaintance!"

"Pooh! She was only my cousin's governess! She ought to have blushed and simpered and taken my kiss, and asked for more," cried the squire. "But she refused the kiss, and I tried to take it. She fought me like a little tigress. She ran, and I pursued her. As it happened, she didn't dare to run within view of the house, lest some one should see her, and I, having an advantage, rushed upon her and took her captive. The way she fought to preserve her lips from contact with mine would have done credit to an Amazon. But I should have won if a man hadn't come up on horseback and fell upon me with a horsewhip before I saw him. He had the advantage then, and compelled me to apologize to the girl. He was Cheswick—Sir Victor, you know. He's a relation to the Thornhursts a good way off, and goes up into Yorkshires every autumn on a visit."

"That's enough to make me hate him!" said Holm. "I would make war on the Thornhursts, root and branch, to the remotest connection. Why didn't you fight him?"

"How could I? But I'll settle with him anon. As to the girl, I'll have the kiss yet. If she wasn't so low-born, I'd marry her. I am regularly bewitched with her, but it wouldn't do to make her Mrs. Todthetly and wake up some morning to find a tribe of bagmen, hucksters, and travelling tinkers waiting on my door-step with the intention of quartering themselves on me for life. If it were not for the relatives, and perhaps a fat publican for a mother-in-law, I'd run the risk and commit matrimony."

"Are you sure she'd have you?" asked Captain Holm.

"Have me? You must be an innocent, Holm, if you think a poor governess would refuse to marry Todthetly of the Grange! Refuse a home like this, social position, money, fine clothes, a carriage! You must be insane to cherish the supposition."

"I did not really think she would refuse you," said Holm. "So she's only a governess? She looked far more like a princess when she passed here yesterday. She made a strong impression upon me."

"And upon me also. She's a proud little minx; and, by-the-bye, there's an odd coincidence about her name, you know. It's the same as yours!"

"What!" cried Holm, starting back.

"You act as if your family had taken a monopoly of your name," said Todthetly, testily. "The girl's name is Holm."

"Holm! By George!" and the captain stared blankly at his host.

"Does the fact seem so utterly incredible?" inquired the squire, in a sarcastic voice. "You can't understand why this low-born girl should have a fine name; but she looks born to the purple."

There was a garden seat near at hand, and Captain Holm sat down upon it. He was trembling all over with eagerness. His bloated, flabby features, about which clung but faint vestige of his early beauty, quivered with a strange emotion.

"Her first name?" he whispered. "Do you know it?"

"Yes; it has an Italian sound. It's Tessa—Tessa Holm."

The captain uttered a cry so full of joy, exultation, and triumph, as to alarm the squire. Then Holm was silent for some minutes, his face growing pale, and his chest heaving with emotion.

"Found! Found at last!" he muttered, after a little while. "My familiar demon must have contrived this strange meeting down in this out-of-the-way place. I tell you, Tod, that girl's my daughter!"

"Your daughter?"

"Yes. I have been searching for her ever since I came back to England. Beautiful, educated, accomplished! She has turned out differently from what I had intended, but she's my daughter."

"I did not know you had but one daughter," said Todthetly, blankly.

"That is all I have. She's my daughter, whose

hated name of Georgia Redruth I changed to Tessa."

"But I don't understand—"
"Listen, then," cried Holm, in wild spirits, his face glowing hotly, his eyes burning. "You know that my wife procured a divorce from me, and afterwards married the Marquis of Thornhurst?"

"Yes, I know it; but what has that to do—"
"A good deal. At the time the divorce was granted she was stopping at a place that belonged to her father at Twickenham. I went there to see her, to try to effect a compromise, on the very day the divorce was granted, and before I got the news of it. I urged my love upon her, and she flouted her decree of divorce in my face. I was mad for the moment—you know my temper, Todhetly—and I caught up the child that was playing at her feet, and fled with it—"

"That's a new to me!" interposed the squire. "I never heard a word of it before. You've been mighty secret about your affairs!"

"Not so. The time had not come to tell it. I fled with the child, as I said, and got away in safety, although Colonel Redruth had all the hounds of the law upon my track. I eluded the detectives in the cleverest fashion, and—But where did this girl come from? Who educated her?"

"My cousin, Molly Gwynne, intimated that the girl was the daughter of a publican, or some such low person. Miss Holm told Molly that until she was eight years old she knew no home save an humble way-side inn, but that a travelling clerk out for a holiday chanced to come along, took a fancy to her, and adopted her. He sent the girl to the Lucy Institute, where Molly was educated ages ago. Molly wrote to Clapham, asking her old teacher to send her a governess for the girls, and Miss Lucy sent Miss Holm."

"That makes it all clear," muttered Holm, his eyes gleaming luridly. "I took my child down into Devonshire, and placed her in the charge of an old servant of our family—a woman who could, I knew, be bribed to do anything. This woman accepted the charge of the child, whose name, as a precautionary measure, I changed to Tessa—Tessa being odd, and easily remembered, and sufficiently unlike her old one to suit me. With the money I gave her, Mrs. Kiggs, the old woman who had been a servant in my father's family, bought a wayside inn at some distance from her former home, and began a flourishing business. You remember the year I met with that accident that so nearly finished my career on Lake Ontario? I was hard up that year. What with gaming and champagne suppers, and the like, I got short of money, and neglected to send the old creature her yearly stipend. She was an avaricious old crone, and, not being willing to support the child any longer, she let that man—what-ever he was—take her away. And—would you believe it?—I sent the remittances every year until this year, and the beldame wrote me encouraging reports about 'little Tessa,' and I believed them all. When I returned to England I posted down into Devonshire with wild haste to learn that the girl had been gone nine years, and that not a clue could be had to the clerk who had adopted her!"

"Then the matter is beyond doubt—the girl is your daughter?" demanded Todhetly.

"She is my daughter, and of as good blood as any in England. I'm poor, Tod. Think what a fortune she will be to me!" cried Holm, jubilantly. "Her mother is the Marchioness of Thornhurst, a woman of great wealth. Her grandfather is Colonel Redruth, who is immensely rich. This girl is his heiress, and she will also inherit the estate and savings of that old martinet Miss Jacoba Redruth. The girl is a great heiress, and if I play my cards properly I can easily make myself rich out of her. Why, Lady Thornhurst offered me a thousand pounds merely for an hour's interview with the girl, when I saw my wife lately."

"I should think it would be rather dangerous to let Lady Thornhurst see the girl, unless you relinquished the idea of making a fortune out of your daughter. If I remember rightly, the Divorce Court gave the custody of the child to your wife. Once let her get sight of the girl, and your goose is cooked, my friend!"

"Ye-a; but I would not allow her to see Tessa unless she gave me a solemn promise not to attempt to take her from me. I can hardly realize my good fortune. I was thinking of the girl when you came up. To think I should have stumbled upon her by accident, when I have advertised in vain for her! And you thought her low-born, and tried to kiss her against her will? The joke is too good—ha, ha!"

Todhetly flushed and sat down upon the garden seat beside his wildly jubilant companion. He wiped his livid-streaked, perspiring face with his handkerchief, and regarded Holm with a strange eagerness. "I suppose I am the best friend you have in the whole world, Holm?" he said, meditatively.

"That's not saying much!"

"I love your daughter," said Todhetly, mopping

his coarse, burly visage with energy. "If you don't tell her about her mother, she'll think you her legal guardian and will obey you. What do you say to letting her marry me?"

Holm laughed mockingly.
"I don't know as I shall suffer her to marry at present," he said. "I'm a lonely man, and propose to solace my life—ahem!—with her innocent affection!"

"That's all stuff and nonsense!" cried Todhetly. "What do you care about 'innocent affection'? You look upon the girl as a speculation. You want to make money out of her. You are hard up at present, and she won't come into her property under a good many years. Colonel Redruth is a hale old fellow. Lady Thornhurst is only some four-and-thirty, young still, and in fine health. You see it will be years before you can realize money from her. Now I can afford to wait, being rich, but you cannot. Give the girl to me for my wife, and I will give you two thousand pounds a year for so long as you live. I can afford to do that, as her fortune will repay me by-and-bye. And when she comes into her estates I'll give you, in addition to the annuity, the sum of ten thousand pounds. You can't do better than that. Now what do you say?"

"The offer seems liberal—"

"I'll bind myself in writing. You have sworn to have revenge upon your former wife, as you said the other night, and I will help you in it to the fullest extent of my ability. I'll help you in all your schemes. You will gain in me a coadjutor worth having."

Holm reflected. Todhetly's offer seemed to him munificent, but he would not commit himself without due consideration.

"Suppose the girl should have taken offence at your action of this morning, and should refuse to marry you?" he suggested.

"I think," answered Todhetly, significantly, "if I were her father, and I told her to do this or that, that she would not dare refuse to obey me. A father has authority which he can stretch to cover any amount of tyranny and persecution, if he so chooses. But perhaps you are fond of the girl?"

"By Heaven, no!" cried Holm, with an imprecation. "She has too much Redruth in her to suit me. I hated her the minute I set eyes on her yesterday. I have vowed to make her a lever in my revenge upon Ignatia. I don't doubt but that my wife would feel it as a terrible degradation to own you as a son-in-law. You are not a moral man, Todhetly; you have your full share of vices; you are low in your tastes—you needn't scowl—unscrupulous, villainous—"

"You are complimentary. I was an innocent boy when you took me under your tutelage years ago. You have made me what I am!"

"I am truthful. I would not give my daughter to an honest man, Todhetly. I mean to wring the hearts of Ignatia and Colonel Redruth. I will humble their haughty pride, and compel them to accept as Tessa's husband a man with whom they would otherwise not deign to associate. You would not think that a father could thus plan concerning his daughter? But all the milk of human kindness in my nature turned to gall years ago. My whole scheme in life is to accomplish my sworn revenge. I have a taste for luxury, and plenty of money is essential to my comfort. I can bend my daughter's will, as I have nearly broken her mother's heart. By Jove, Todhetly, I think that a man who broke his mother's heart, as I did mine, and brought her to her grave is capable of anything. I believe there is more fiend than man in me, anyhow!"

"I believe so too," said Todhetly, involuntarily.

"But about my offer, Holm. Is it a bargain?"

"Yes; we'll draw up the papers in a few days. You can have the girl for your wife!"

"If she refuses?"

"She won't repeat the refusal!" said Holm, a diabolical light glowing in his eyes. "She'll find I am her master!"

"That is well. Look at her with that expression, and she'll give in through sheer terror. There is nothing like taking a decided stand at the outset."

"I must go over to Heathstead and see the girl at once," said Holm. "Her governess days are over. I shall take her away from Mrs. Gwynne's—but what am I to do with her?"

"Bring her to the Grange, of course," said Todhetly, boldly. "Why not? You are my guest, and your presence protects your daughter from invidious remarks. Bring her here, and make my house your own. I'll court the girl under your sanction, and marry her before any one suspects what is going on. What do you say?"

"I agree to your plan. I'll fetch the girl here. It will be a very agreeable asylum for the present, for I really did not know what to do with her. I suspect she will be a sort of white elephant on my hands, Tod, and it is as well that I should make some one else her keeper. I must go over now, and alone, and do the affectionate and highly emotional

father. I shall probably bring her back with me."

"I will improve your absence, Holm, by ordering the best rooms in the house to be prepared for Miss Holm. I will send a man over for her luggage, after her arrival here."

Captain Holm arose and glanced down at his attire. It was neat to dandyism. He smiled with self-complacency, and said:

"I wonder how I shall please Miss Holm's romantic fancy. I will proceed to do the 'heavy father' in my best style, and I will warrant you that she will take to me at once. Think of it—taking to a man who would gladly kill her mother if he were sure of never being found out! I wonder if any strange instinct warns Ignatia that a crisis has occurred in the fortunes of her daughter. Addio, my friend, for an hour or more. I shall bring my daughter back with me, and with her in my power begins the second instalment of my revenge. Ha, ha! Now to improve the good fortune my familiar demon has sent me!"

He walked briskly away, leaving himself out of the Grange grounds, and hurried along the bleak road towards Heathstead—the joy of a triumphant demon in his soul!

(To be continued.)

KEEPING ACCOUNTS.

I WISH to urge upon all young people, whose habits have yet to be formed—not the duty of enterprise, nor of frugality, nor of temperance, nor of industry and thrift; but the duty of keeping careful accounts.

This is not performed by simply entering every penny spent, but of so balancing receipts and expenditures that one may know every day precisely how he stands with the world. Credit may be helpful in an organized business. But when young men or women are just beginning to earn a little money it is wise for them never to owe a penny, not even for a day. It is better to go without a hundred needed things than to be in debt; and, the poorer you are, the more tyrannical will debt prove to be. A rich man may venture to go in debt; he has resources which have only to be collected to meet it. But a poor man in debt has only his scant earnings, which often barely suffice to pay his daily necessities, and leave the debt, with accumulating interest, to worry him, and to tempt him to dishonesty.

It is wise for every young man to refuse to incur debt, and to oblige himself to keep a clear and minute account of every shilling gained and spent. The habit once formed, it will be as easy to be methodical in money matters as to be careless.

Small as this may seem, it will really exert a moral influence upon one's whole life. It is the foundation of business. If one begins to get on in life, he will have become so wedded to method and to a clear understanding of his affairs that nothing will be left to chance. He will see every day just the road he is on, and how far along he is.

It may seem superfluous to exhort business men to pursue the same course. But it is probable that not one half of the business men keep their accounts in such a manner that they themselves, or any one for them, could tell, without weeks and months of investigation, what their real standing is. The settling of estates is a melancholy business. All values seem to shrink; hundreds of things important to the estate when kept only in the man's head, and he dying, the record of them is lost, or is recovered only by long search. Two partners may get along smoothly while they are alive. Several instances have come to our knowledge of miserable results following the death of business men, arising from the want of thorough account keeping.

It ought not to be left a question of business prudence. A careful record of all affairs should be a part of business morality. It is a part of right living to leave one's affairs so that they can be settled without misunderstanding or quarrel. No one has a right to roll over on his heirs a load of difficulties. It is a part of a good preparation for death to have one's affairs so that no one will be injured, and no one perplexed and burdened.

Parents should bring up both boys and girls to keep accounts. It should be impressed upon them, early and late, that business cannot be safely carried on without minute and accurate record. After a habit of accounts is once formed, system in affairs and method in accounts become easy. Instead of hindering they facilitate business, economize time, give clearness to one's course, prevent complications, enable one at any moment to know his actual condition, and keep his estate so that if called to leave it he can do so without a liability of tormenting his family or heirs with a wretched tangle of vexations and disappointments.

Therefore, keep accounts!

H. W. B.

OPENING OF A NEW HOSPITAL AT DUDLEY.—The Countess of Dudley a few days ago formally

opened the fine hospital given by the earl to the people of Dudley, but locally known as the Quest Hospital, in consequence of a wealthy nail master having endowed it with 20,000*l*. The hospital has been furnished throughout by his lordship, and the total cost is about 30,000*l*, including the value of minerals below the surface. Lord Lyttelton, the Lord Lieutenant, and the Bishop of Worcester assisted at the opening, and the day was observed as a general holiday.

THE CHICAGO FUND.—The Atlantic Telegraph Company, in addition to their munificent gift of 2,000*l*. to the Chicago Fund, have agreed to send all messages to the fund free of charge.

WOMAN'S POWER.—Those disasters which break down the spirit of a man, and prostrate him in the dust, seem to call forth all the energies of the softer sex, and give such intrepidity and elevation to their character that at times it approaches to sublimity. Nothing can be more touching than to behold a soft and tender female, who had been all weakness and dependence, and alive to every trivial roughness, while treading the prosperous paths of life, suddenly rising in mental force to be the comforter and supporter of her husband under misfortune, and abiding, with unshrinking firmness, the bitterest blasts of adversity. As the vine which has long twined its graceful foliage about the oak, and been lifted by it in sunshine, will, when the hardy plant is rifted by the thunderbolt, cling round it with its caressing tendrils, and bind up its shattered boughs, so is it beautifully ordered by Providence that woman, who is the mere dependent and ornament of man in his happier hours, should be his stay and solace when smitten with sudden calamity; winding herself into the rugged recesses of his nature, tenderly supporting the drooping head, and binding up the broken heart.

MAJORITY OF VISCOUNT CAMPDEN.

The festivities in celebration of the coming of age of the eldest son of the Earl of Gainsborough were brought to a close the other day. The hospitality of the noble earl had been extended to the villages of Exton, Cottesmore, Barrowden, and Whitwell. Nearly the whole of the inhabitants of those places (men, women, and children) assembled at the first-mentioned village, and were regaled in the most liberal manner: the men, to the number of 250, were provided with a substantial dinner, which was served up in a large tent; and in the afternoon between 600 and 700 women and children sat down to a bounteous tea in the same marquee.

The earl and some of his guests were present, and greatly interested themselves in securing the comfort and enjoyment of the participants in the feast. At the dinner the health of the Earl of Gainsborough was proposed by the Rev. J. H. Hill, rector of Cranoe, and was feelingly responded to by the noble earl. The health of Viscount Campden was proposed by James Slack Black, gamekeeper, one of the oldest servants on the estate. Lord Campden gracefully acknowledged the compliment paid to him by the old servant. All the toasts were most enthusiastically drunk, and the whole of the company appeared to heartily enjoy themselves.

The principal entertainment of the week took place when upwards of 400 of the tenants were invited to a ball and supper at Exton House. The guests began to arrive soon after eight o'clock, and were received at the entrance of the ball-room by the noble earl, Viscount Campden, and Lady Constance Noel, and were severally introduced by Mr. Frisby. When all the guests had arrived the ball was opened with a country dance, Viscount Campden leading off with Miss Hammond, of Barnsdale Lodge, Oakham, Mr. Rd. Thompson and Lady Constance, and the Duke of Norfolk and Lady Edith following. Dancing was kept up with more or less spirit until nearly one o'clock, when supper was announced. The Earl of Gainsborough and one of the Ladies Howard, preceded by the yeomanry band, then led the way, followed by the noblemen and ladies on a visit to the hall and the other guests, to the monster marquee, where a magnificent repast was spread out. When all were seated the *coup d'œil* from the entrance of the marquee was very striking, the gay uniform of the yeomanry and the dresses of the ladies, combined with the coloured lining of the tent, the numerous flags and banners, and the innumerable chandeliers filled with wax candles, presenting a very brilliant effect.

The Earl of Gainsborough and his distinguished visitors were seated at a long raised table facing the guests of the evening, and immediately in front of him were two other raised tables, upon one of which was a baron of beef weighing between 30 and 40 stone and a whole roasted buck, and at the end of another table just opposite the chairman was the birthday cake.

There were also 2 filets de bœuf piqués, 21 joints of roast beef, 16 joints of pressed beef, 17 galantines of

veal, 8 galantines of chickens, 24 game pies, 14 large hams, 28 tongues, 15 turkeys, 8 boars' heads, 6 crêpes de volaille, 24 bourré of aspic, 15 rounds of beef, 10 legs of mutton, 14 shoulders of mutton, 72 roast fowls, 8 boiled fowls, 54 pheasants, 16 roast ducks, 62 partridge and 8 large rabbit pies, 20 plum puddings, 14 large tarts, 41 clear jellies, 23 creams, 16 blanc manges, 4 charlotte d'abricots, 10 nougats, 12 gateaux néapolitains, 9 croques en bouchés, 4 large meringues, 104 dishes of mixed pastry, with salads and vegetables: total dishes, 1,000. Grapes, pine-apples, &c.

The serving of such a large assemblage, most of whom had become impatient for refreshment (having been there between four and five hours), severely tasked the exertions and tried the temper of the waiters; but by the endeavours of Mr. Frisby, the steward, Mr. Dawson, of Stamford, and the butler, all were at length supplied, and high spirits were in the ascendant when the toasts were commenced.

The cask of ale, brewed October, 1850, which had been walled up in the cellars of the Old Hall, was tapped, in the presence of the earl, the Viscount Campden, the Ladies Noel, the Hon. Edward Noel, Lady F. Fitzclarence, &c., and William Cox, of Cottesmore, who brewed the beverage. The ale proved everything that could be wished for.

FOUND AT LAST.

The murmur of the South wind is heard through the thick forest; a balmy breath of flowers scents the gale; the thunder of mighty streams, loosed from the hard bonds of winter, resounds from the hills as the water leaps from crag to mossy stone, flinging rainbow-coloured mist into the air and spray to the grassy banks.

The joyous song of birds, the gentle waving of the trees, the bright sunshine, the deep blue sky, the fresh smell of the moss, the pale stars of the primrose shining in the thick and pathless woods, proclaim the voice of Spring!

Her song has a freshness and brings thoughts of all that is beautiful in nature and pleasant to memory.

Come forth, come forth, all ye upon whom the sun's rays never shine, upon whom Heaven's pure air never breathes; leave the din and dust of town, your humble lodging, forget your daily toil, and let Nature stamp the image of her works in your hearts and brains; let the remembrance of woods, flowers, sunshine, and glittering streams, enliven your dreams, freshen your spirits, give tone and colour to your lives as bright as the rainbow's, but not so fleeting.

A peal of thunder broke overhead. Languidly and wearily I aroused myself. I cannot recall my wandering senses. I thought I was on a hill, looking down on a lovely landscape, varied by fields of spring corn and shaded by bare brown woods; I heard the murmur of running water, the songs of birds, and the voice of an angel calling me hence.

Was it all a dream then? and have I been sleeping away a bright, sunny afternoon? It must be so, and, tired out of books, myself, London, and law, I arose from the sofa and gazed vacantly at a heavy shower sent to refresh us after three days of unusual heat.

I turned to my book again, but it would not do. I read and reread to no purpose. The pictures of my dream were so vividly recalled that I felt certain the craving for fresh air and rest must be satisfied before I could set steadily to work again.

So away books! Away dull thought and care! and off by break of day to the sea. The stirring thought alone gave me vivacity where all had seemed dull and listless before, as with a light heart and merry whistle I made the few preparations necessary for my departure.

I did not sleep much that night. I could not decide whether I should like best to go—place after place coursed each other through my bewildered brain; this, that, and the other objection chased sleep from my pillow, till, after trying every expedient known to the sleepless, I saw daylight appear, and with it the consciousness that I must get up, and an overpowering drowsiness at the same time. I indulged the feeling to the last minute, then dressed, drank a cup of coffee, and started.

After a hurried ride I alight at the railway station, and, so eager am I to secure a seat in the first train that starts, that which class carriage I travel in seems of no importance whatever.

"Anywhere," said I as a porter held the door of a third-class open.

In I jumped and found I was not the last by any means; blowy men, and fat, comfortable-looking women, hurried to and fro, loaded with bundles, baskets, shawls, and babies, affording matter for absorbing speculating respecting their ultimate destinations and the possibility of their conveyance.

The guard opened the door of the carriage in

which I was seated, and after a summary survey said:

"Room here; make haste, get in."

In vain we declared we were full, for the rapid entrance of a hot, tired, dusty-looking woman with two urchins crying apologetically declared our mistake. Their tempers had been ruffled by their mother's frantic haste and their own terror of being left behind.

After the poor woman was seated she set about arranging her bundles and baskets; then, picking up her still-weeping offspring one by one, she bumped each down on the hard seat, whisked a large red cotton handkerchief out of her pocket, and proceeded forthwith to rub and polish each little bedaubed countenance till it shone again, telling the unfortunate victims of her maternal solicitude at the same time to hold their noise or father would be sure to flog 'em when they got home.

This was her way of comforting her children for their fright and flurry, and making them feel happy for the day.

But no sooner had we passed the precincts of the town than the sight of fields, trees, young lambs, and snow-white, flowery orchards cheered the hearts and gladdened the countenances of my little fellow-travellers.

All went merrily till hunger besieged the citadel, when the great basket disgorged its contents, and unfolded treasures in the form of sandwiches, tarts, oranges, cocoa-nuts, and a large bottle, to the opening at the top of which each little mouth clung like a leech till the application of parental physical force succeeded in wrenching it away.

Hunger and thirst appeased, peace succeeded for a space, and I directed my attention to a thin, spare little woman, who appeared so wrapt in meditation as to be dead to all that passed around. She also carried a bag, stuffed very full, I suspected, of comestibles; but when at length the strings were undrawn, behold no carnal meat was there, but simply packets of little sheets of printed paper called leaflets; these, with a Christian tract and a hymn, were distributed to each with great courtesy.

The two boys then received in addition a small book each, about an inch and a half square, containing an edifying history of "The happy pie man." The bag was then closed, and the owner leaned back, closed her eyes, and was again wrapt in profound meditation.

I should like to know what her thoughts were—especially about those two naughty children who made tramps of their papers and shouted "Dixey's Land" through them with all their might.

These sportive youths arrived at their destination at Red Hill, and were succeeded by a pretty young woman with a baby, totally inexperienced in tunnels and railway travelling, who screeched with unrelenting zeal until we arrived at the Brighton station, where we left the carriage, all devoutly thankful for a speedy deliverance from that infant's affliction.

I hastily wended my way down the Queen's Road and West Street, anxious to see the sea and feel the spray dashed from its mighty waves. A stream of people went the same road, and mingled with the throng on the beach.

What a brilliant scene it was! the sun glittering on the water, the handsome, white town like a crescent encircling the shore, the stirring life on beach, road, and streets breathing fresh life into the weary, toil-worn Londoner.

Then the sailors perseveringly and smilingly invite you to "take a sail this fine morning, sir," putting aside all negatives by an assurance of the fair prospect of a beautiful trip in that fast-sailing yacht the "Skylark."

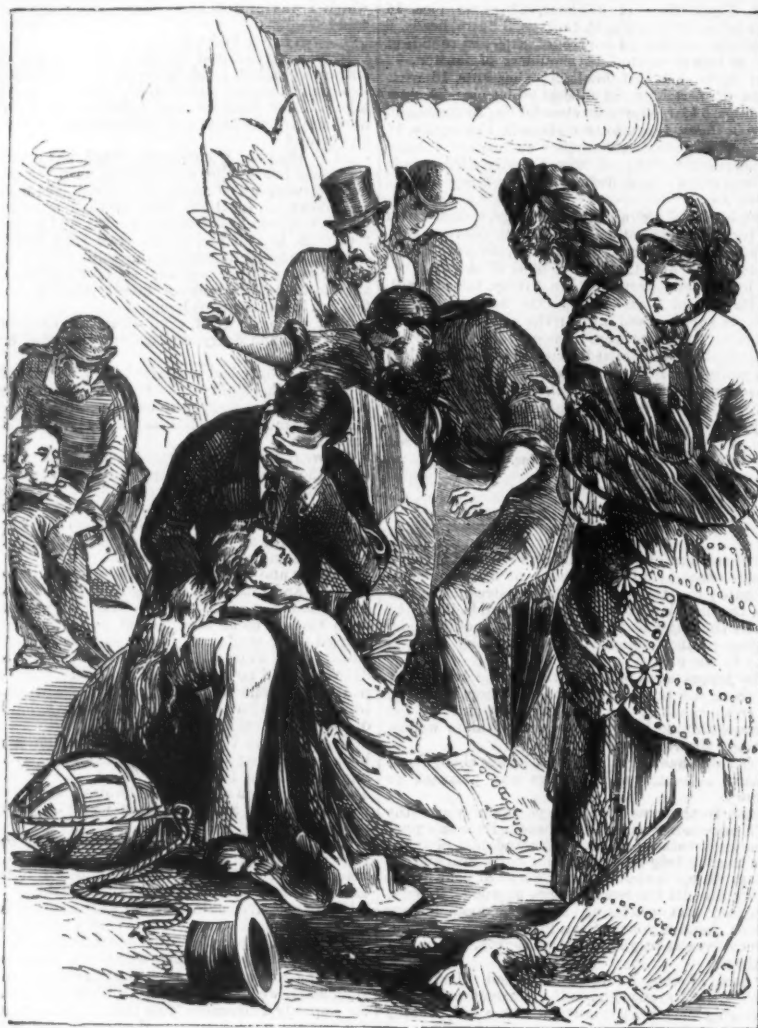
To those who feel partial to the pleasant movements of a yacht, produced by a heavy swell, I wished much enjoyment, but when I saw the pale and dejected countenances that landed on their return to the shore I congratulated myself that on this occasion I had shown a decided want of pluck.

After a substantial luncheon I walked upon the Parade and West Pier, and looked at the pretty, well-dressed girls one always meets here.

Sauntering along in luxurious idleness, I was attracted by a group of people around a boatman, talking and laughing gaily to each other, while an elderly gentleman bargained for the hire of a boat. I approached them close enough to hear, without distinguishing what was said.

A soft, musical laugh startled me, I felt myself change colour, and I looked among the group to catch sight of her from whose lips I had heard that laugh before.

I moved cautiously, and so near as to be able to look over the shoulders of one standing outside the circle. There she stood with her arm linked in his—Arthur Welford's—looking pleadingly and affectionately into his face; he was looking another way. Then I heard her speak once more; I was glad to hear her voice again, though the words she uttered were not addressed to me, nor were those soft blue eyes lifted to meet mine, nor was her heart mine, but another's. Her accents recalled painful memories,



["DEAD!"]

but still I stood straining every nerve to catch the sound of these words:

"Oh, Arthur, I cannot trust myself in that boat. You go; do not let me deprive you of the pleasure. I will sit on the beach and watch you all the time. Papa will stay with me; he is like me, he never feels safe in a little boat—do let me stay on shore!"

"Not I. Nonsense. Where would be my pleasure unless you were by my side? No, no, all go, or all stay say I? What do you think, Mr. Blair?"

"Why, does Florence feel afraid? If she does, she ought not with such an experienced carman as you. You will take care of her, Welford, I'm sure. Now then, in with you; you two take the oars first."

In jumped two fine, strong-looking youths, eager to begin the pleasant toil.

"Now then, Welford, get in, and I'll give you Florence."

Those words stung me to the quick, but still I looked on and listened.

Florence clung fast to her father and again entreated to be left behind, but in vain—father and lover laughed at her fears, and between them she was lifted into the boat.

Then I moved hastily away, with the sound of her scream of terror ringing in my ears as the boat was pushed into the water. I was glad I had seen her again, yet pained.

Report then had been truthful in this instance, and Arthur Welford had won what I had lost, and years even now to possess.

My boyhood's love and the hope of maturer years must now be extinguished for ever. It is five years since last we parted, and time has only added to her beauty. Care has not yet left its trace upon her, but thought and feeling have given expression to that fair, child-like face that I have loved so truly and so long.

I did think, however, in spite of her father's injunction to the contrary, that I should be sometimes kindly remembered even as in by-gone days,

and often hoped that time and circumstances might bring about some happy change that would help to remove the great barrier that wealth and station placed between us. As children this bar was not recognized, and too late for my happiness the mountain was deemed insurmountable.

Painfully my eyes have witnessed what my heart must acknowledge. The heart of Florence Blair is given to the keeping of Arthur Welford. When I remember her henceforth it must be as a bright dream of youth—not a source of grief and weak repining.

She looks happy, and he, if physiognomy may be trusted, is worthy of her.

Pondering on the past and the present, I walked faster and faster, until I found myself some distance on the Dyke Road. I paused to recover breath, and looked towards the sea. There was the little boat, being rowed smoothly along with its happy freight. Back came the fluttering of my heart, and I turned round to gaze on the smooth, velvety, undulating hills, studded with browsing sheep and swept by the shadows of the clouds as they flew through the sunshine.

Hark! Was it fancy brought that scream again so clearly back to me?

I turned sharply round towards the sea, and saw a splash—a blot—a confusion on the waves, then the little boat turned bottom upwards!

I hailed an empty fly that was passing, jumped in, and rode fast to the beach, where a dense crowd had collected, watching the accident with painful interest, and the fast rowing of the boats gone out to save.

The boatmen did their utmost, toiling against time, but every minute seemed an hour to me, who could do naught but look on and wait, in torturing suspense, with the whirl and buzzing of the excited multitude around me.

An old man, seeing my agitation, kindly handed me his glass, saying:

"See, sir; two are holding on to the boat; they

are a good way out. Row as hard as they can; I am afraid all can't be saved, unless they are swimmers."

I took the glass; my eyes were dim; I could not see. I returned it to its owner, and made my way out of the crowd, for my heart sank, and I wished to be alone.

At last one boat turned towards land. The people

around cheered as they neared the shore. Two exhausted men feebly waved their hands in response! They were at once received by those best able to restore them. I heeded them but little; all my energies were bestowed upon the boatmen. Vainly I implored them to let me join in their efforts to rescue those still left behind. Courteously but firmly did they decline farther aid, saying there were plenty out now, and the lighter the boats were the better. They were right, and I desisted from my entreaties.

My attention was soon directed to the arrival of another boat. This was cheered also, but no response was heard or seen from the boat. When it came on shore a gray-headed old man was lifted out and placed in skilful hands. It was Mr. Blair!

In my feverish anxiety for the daughter's safety how little I felt for the father! I made hasty inquiries for Florence, and, rapidly describing her, offered a large sum if they brought her alive to land.

"Two ladies are coming ashore," they replied; and off they went again.

The boat they mentioned soon came within sound of those on the beach, when one of the oarsmen shouted, with the lungs of a Stentor, "Two ladies!" and waved his hat in triumph. Heartily and kindly were they received. They were not so exhausted as might have been anticipated, being expert swimmers. They had used every effort to help those who could not swim. Indeed, the men said they had difficulty in getting them into the boats at all, so anxious were they to see all safe first.

There was another lady yet to be found, and there was a young fellow swimming about after her.

"We tried to pull him in, but he dived, and would listen to no reason," said the boatman.

On hearing this a cry of agony broke from me. A part of the crowd, on hearing what the boatmen had said of the two rescued ladies, accompanied them on their way to their residence, giving enthusiastic expression to their admiration of their heroic conduct. But I sat down, crushed with my own sorrow, and trying to brace my nerves for the greater one that I knew was awaiting me.

If Florence had been able to swim she might have been saved, but still there is always hope in uncertainty. Ah, Welford! Welford! if the boding of my sad heart is true, and if our hearts, filled with the same passion, beat in unison now with the strong bond of one hope, you will struggle on till death rather than leave her breathless form in that watery grave!—the cold, pitiless grave of the love of so many hearts!

A cry of "Here they come!" aroused me. I stood up and strained my eyes to see that which was dear as life; every nerve tingled, and the blood rushed in tumultuous throbs to my heart.

The boat reached the surf and grated noisily among the shingles, while the solemn silence of its inmates proclaimed the awful truth, before the agitated whisper of the word "Dead!" fell upon our ears.

"Dead!" was muttered softly and sorrowfully from one to another; and so I saw her once again clasped in her lover's arms!

I turned again to her father, whose loud, sharp cry drew me to his side as he fell, bleeding from the mouth, close to the water's edge. The sorrow of bereavement is sacred, but greatly mitigated by sympathy; but when there is none to share it with us, and circumstances compel us to look the desolation in our own breasts, how it prostrates the strength, levels our pride, and quenches the spirit. Fortitude is a powerful stay, and religion a still greater, but there are times and seasons when memory and feeling flood these barriers, and, rushing wildly over every comfort given to humanity in the deepest affliction, leave the mind and heart desolate, incapable even of listening to the comforter.

In just such a mood did I return to my chambers in London—worn in spirit, sick at heart! After a dreary meal I fell asleep, for the first time since I saw her dead by the seashore.

Then I saw her once again, spoke to her and heard her answer, kindly as of old, and rambled with her over the meadows, through the woods; whilst sitting there for shelter from the noontide heat, she sang a strange, wild melody; then I woke, rested and comforted by her gentle presence.

E. J.

MR. DISRAELI AND THE IRISH MEMBER.—A genuine Hibernian, of somewhat colourless politics, was returned by an obscure Irish constituency, and on his arrival at St. Stephen's the whips of both parties were anxious to secure him as a supporter.

Towards this end Viscountess Beaconsfield (then Mrs. Disraeli) sent him an invitation card. During the evening the company got dispersed into groups, in one of which were Disraeli and the new member, who had been thoroughly overpowered by the brilliant conversation and elegant condescension of his host, to whom, by way of compliment, he said, in the purest brogue—"I have never read your novels myself, but my daughters have, and bedad they say they're mighty clever!" "Sir," said Disraeli, drawing himself up, and looking his admirer full in the face, "that is fame."

LILLIE ATHERTON.

CAPTAIN RALPH SEVERNS had never married—or, at least, he had never had a wife in this country—and the only members of his household whom he had admitted to share at all in his companionship had been Seth and Hester Dabney—man and wife—the two servants who had been with him in the beginning, and had remained to the end.

It was called Maplewood. There were one hundred and fifty acres in the estate—one hundred acres of land and fifty acres of water; and this water was in a beautiful lake, upon the northern shore of which, on a gentle slope, backed by a forest of huge maples, stood the mansion.

Upon his death-bed, contrary to general expectation, Captain Ralph Severns had remembered a sister whom he had not seen for years, and to this sister and her heirs he had willed his estate.

This sister, then a widow, and named Atherton, had come to Maplewood, bringing with her an only daughter.

But Mrs. Atherton did not remain at Maplewood a month. She got frightened at strange things which happened there, and moved away; and ere long afterwards she died.

So Maplewood came to be the property of Lillie Atherton, the widow's daughter. But Lillie would not go there to live. She let old Seth and Hester Dabney hold the place in charge, directing Seth to find good tenants if he possibly could.

Parties came and hired the mansion, but they did not remain; and other parties came—for in all the country round there was not a more charming spot—but these other parties were driven out as the first had been.

Captain Ralph Severns had been dead three years, and fully a score of people had tried to live at Maplewood and had failed, when my attention was attracted by the beauties of the place.

I had just come home from sea, and had promised my wife that I would try and settle down and become a sober landsman.

My wife and Lillie Atherton were bosom friends, and it was partly through this friendship for the young heiress—for Lillie was only nineteen—that I was led to Maplewood; but having once seen the place, and admired the beauties of its surroundings, I was anxious to make it my home.

Lillie shook her head, and advised me not to go. She was eager to find a good tenant, as the valuable estate was at present simply an encumbrance upon her hands, but she would not have my wife subjected to the horrors of the great mansion. Then she told me candidly that it was haunted. She had herself seen and heard most frightful things there, as had all who had attempted to live beneath the roof.

But I was determined to make the trial; and, after due deliberation and discussion, my wife, who had great faith in my courage and prowess, consented to go with me.

So, with a letter from Lillie, we presented ourselves at Maplewood.

I found Seth Dabney to be a man of sixty, or thereabouts, and his wife of the same age. They were meek and humble, and seemed very anxious to serve me. In fact, Seth was altogether too meek. He was an old sea-dog; and if Captain Ralph had ever been a pirate, as had been whispered since his death, it was not hard for me to believe that Seth Dabney had been his "best bowler."

Seth's face was never made for the face of a meek and humble man. He had evidently schooled himself into the character. His face was cunning and sinister. Besides Seth and Hester I found dwelling at Maplewood Peter Dabney and wife.

Peter was a young man of five-and-twenty, a son of Seth and Hester, and his wife was an innocent-looking woman, with the appearance of a household drudge.

Old Dabney shook his head with mysterious solemnity when I told him I had taken the place, and said he hoped I might be able to do what others had not done.

I asked Seth how he and his wife had managed to remain there; and he replied that he had bound himself by a solemn oath to Captain Ralph that he would

remain and care for the mansion while he lived, or until satisfied tenants possessed it.

"How," I asked, "do your son and his wife manage to stand it?"

"My boy," answered Seth, with a tremendous sigh and groan, "stays for his poor mother's sake. The same oath which binds me binds my wife, and she would die if Peter were to forsake her. It wears upon the boy's wife, as you can see; but she will not leave her husband."

Could I have had my own way, under the impressions which forced themselves upon me, I should have turned Seth Dabney and his family out before I moved in; but that could not be done, as it had been a condition of Captain Ralph's will that Seth and Hester should find a home beneath the roof while they lived, unless they chose, of their own accord, to depart. So the Dabneys were permanent fixtures. But the mansion was large enough, and they had their own living-rooms and dormitory in an attached wing.

On our first night at Maplewood we were kept up till very late. It was almost midnight before our beds had been set up, and while the servants were busy in that department my wife and myself worked at arranging our library. The clock had just struck twelve when Peter's wife—her name was Lucy—looked in and informed us that the chamber was arranged. I was hanging a picture, and wished to finish it before I left it. My wife's dressing-case was in a small tiring-room upstairs, and she said she would run and get it while I hung the picture. She took a lighted candle and went. I had finished my work to my satisfaction, and had just folded up my step-ladder when my wife came rushing in, with her candle extinguished, and, as she dropped her dressing-case upon the floor, I caught her in my arms. She was pale and frightened, and looked over her shoulder, as though expecting that something had followed her. As soon as she could speak I heard her story.

She had gone to the tiring-room and got her case, and, as she reached the head of the broad staircase on her return, she had seen, upon the landing at her right, a female figure, robed in white, with blood upon its ashen face, and with dabs of blood upon its snowy drapery.

"Oh, it was dreadful!" said my wife. "The spectre waved its hand in a threatening manner, and said to me, in an awful whisper:

"Woman, there is a curse upon this house, and upon all who follow in the footsteps of Ralph Severns!"

"Then she pointed to a gaping wound upon her forehead, and, with a cry of terror, I fled down the stairs." Surely this was not a pleasant opening, but I urged it upon my wife that she had not been harmed; and, furthermore, that a respectable ghost would have appeared to me rather than to her.

"It was cowardly," I told her, "to frighten a woman when there was a strong man in the house who was alone responsible for the interruption of strangers upon the solitude of her ghostship."

I kissed her and asked her if she would wait until I had seen the spectre. She said she should not fear while I was near her; and of her own thought she declared that if the goblin had not harmed Seth Dabney, or any member of his family, in all these months, they could not possibly have cause to harm us who were innocent of all thought of offence.

It was half an hour after midnight when we retired. The chamber which we had selected was the most pleasant one in the mansion, a large square room, with a deep bay window looking down upon the lake. The hangings were of green velvet, heavily fringed with gold, and the curtains, though slightly yellow from time, were clean, and of finest lace.

I left a small lamp burning upon the dressing-table, and, being very tired, I fell asleep soon after touching the pillow.

How long I had slept I cannot say, but it could not have been an hour, when I was awakened by my wife, who was clinging to me in fright; and as I awoke I heard a low, moaning sound, as of some one in deep distress; and presently a whisper, as though the speaker were close to my ear—a whisper awful and distinct—and these were the words that were spoken:

"A curse there is upon this house, and upon all who would follow in the footsteps of Ralph Severns! Beware!"

The lamp had been extinguished, and while the foregoing words were being whispered the apartment was pervaded by a ghostly light—a sulphurous, deathly, waving glare—and presently a female figure appeared at the foot of the bed—the same which my wife had seen upon the landing. It was robed in white, the face pale and ghastly, and dark spots were upon the brow and upon the robes. It was surely nothing of human mould, for it stood upon the air, and as I sat up I could see its feet treading empty space on a level with the bed-frame.

With a threatening wave of the hand the figure bowed its head, and melted away into thin air—melted away with a sorrowing sigh—and the ghostly glare faded out, leaving only the pale glimmer of the star beams to break the midnight gloom.

As soon as I could collect my scattered senses I broke from my wife's grasp and leaped out upon the floor, and very quickly lighted the lamp.

The doors were fast—locked, as I had left them; the windows had not been touched; the hangings were all intact; and nowhere, after the strictest search, could I find the slightest trace of any method of ingress or egress for a material body.

If my wife had held the reins of direction we should have packed up in the morning and left; for she was not only convinced that she had seen a *bona-fide* ghost, but she believed that the terrible visitation would be repeated so long as we remained beneath the roof. But I was not to be driven off so easily. I spent the greater part of the remainder of the night in ruminating, and I thought a great deal; but in all my thinking there was no thought of ghosts.

The figure which I had seen in our chamber was but a shadow—I knew that. But whence came it? My wife thought from the land of spirits, but I did not. I had no faith in any such possibility; or, to put it moderately, I did not think it at all probable.

In the morning Seth Dabney made it his business to ask me how I had rested. I told him I had been seriously disturbed; and I gave him to understand that if the spirits of Captain Ralph Severns's departed victims wished to inhabit the place I should leave.

I could see by the old man's face as he turned away that he was well satisfied. It was a very slight token which his face gave, but it was a key to the mystery. It told me plainly that he wanted me to go, as he had wanted others to go before me.

As soon as I could get away by myself I went up into our chamber, taking with me a hammer and a chisel.

Around the chamber was a high oaken wainscot, and this I proceeded to sound with my hammer. Very soon I found a place opposite the foot of the bed which gave back a hollow sound.

A critical examination revealed to me the fact that at this point a panel, three feet long by two feet high, was loose, and I could detect slight abrasions upon its surface, as though it had been slid behind the casing; but I could not move it without breaking it, as it appeared to be fastened upon the other side. But that was a good beginning.

Upon going outside I found that the wall in which was the loose panel was towards a chamber which we had as yet appropriated to no particular use, as its single small window left it far from pleasant. From this chamber, next to the outer wall of the building, and towards my own apartment, opened a closet, occupying not more than four feet of the division partition; so that from this closet to the opposite wall there was left a space of at least three feet between the two rooms; this space was sealed up, and it was into this space that the sliding panel opened.

My next field of examination was below; and I was not long in discovering that the space directly beneath the moveable panel, and occupying half the underlying area of the dark chamber, was also sealed up, but so adroitly cut into by closets and cupboards that only a well-directed examination could have revealed the fact.

Never mind the details of my persistent search. It occupied time, but I succeeded in the end.

I found entrance into this last-named sealed-up space from the cellar, and there I found what I had anticipated.

I discovered a powerful argand burner, with a polished concave reflector, and, also, two large mirrors set at a proper angle for throwing a reflection upward; and directly in the line of the reflection was the sliding panel in the wainscot of my chamber.

I also found here a long white robe; and it was no longer a mystery how the ghostly spectacle had been produced.

The reflection of the operator below had been thrown up through the open panel upon the white curtains at the foot of our bed; and those curtains had been carefully arranged to perform their part in the optical illusion.

One other thing I found in this secret place; there were speaking-tubes leading upward; and upon returning to my chamber I found a point at the head of the bed where the wall-paper was perforated, and upon putting my finger through I felt the end of the tube. Thus the dreadful whispers were accounted for.

Soth Dabney had spent both time and money in perfecting his arrangement for frightening tenants away from Maplewood, and he had hoped that for a mere nominal sum he might in time be able to purchase the estate; but his hopes were crushed when I appeared to him with the proofs of his wickedness in my possession.

If he had thought to deny anything I very soon convinced him that I had travelled, and seen the world, and that all attempts at farther deception would be worse than useless.

To save himself from a public trial and certain condemnation, he finally confessed to me all his iniquity. He showed me how he had arranged wooden troughs under the eaves, and deep down in the cellar, in which to roll cannon-balls for the production of thunder; and he showed to me other speaking-tubes, leading from a single point below to various points above, by means of which he could cause the same voice to sound in different parts of the mansion at the same time.

He confessed also that his wife and his son's wife often appeared to female guests in ghostly guise, which accounted for my wife's fright upon the landing.

I sent for Lillie Atherton, and in the depth of her gratitude for the regained estate she allowed Seth Dabney and his family to depart unwhipped of justice, and we have heard of them no more.

So joy and peace came to dwell in the old mansion, and the broad acres of Maplewood bloomed with renewed beauty; the only shock which followed the disclosure of Seth Dabney's diabolism was the one experienced by those dear lovers of the marvellous who had thus lost a prop to their faith in ghosts.

S. C. J.

FAETIÆ.

THE reason we don't hear of girls giving the mitten now-a-days—they don't learn to knit.

WHY does a coat get larger when taken out of a carpet-bag? Because when you take it out you'll find it in croasses.

THE fellow who called tight boots comfortable defends his position by saying that they make a man forget all his other miseries.

BECAUSE a man who attends a flock of sheep is a shepherd it is no reason that a man who keeps cows should be a cow-ard.

A MATRON says there is more love in a flour-barrel than in all the roses and woodbine that ever grew.

DEY READING.—Can you realize Mrs. Malaprop's bewilderment at hearing her grandson read from an article in the paper, about Rome.—"The ground is so parched that it is full of fishers?"—Punch.

"STIRRING" APPEAL.—A Michigan paper publishes the following: "Fellow citizens! If you are asleep—awake! If you are awake—move! If you are moving—walk! If you are walking—run! If you are running—fly to the rescue!"

THE NEAREST WAY.

Stranger: "My good man, can you tell me the nearest way to Hyde Park?"

Cabby: "Just inside the cab here, sir."

THE BALLOT AND THE WOMEN.—An old bachelor says that giving the ballot to women would not amount to anything practically, because they would keep denying that they were old enough to vote until they got too old to take any interest in politics.

A WRIGHTY ARGUMENT.

Lean Passenger: "H'm! Fly they don't charge by weight in these buses."

Stout ditto: "Think so? Why, if they did, they'd never stop to pick you up!"—Fun.

ONLY ONE THING WANTED.—One exceedingly warm day in June a neighbour met an old man and remarked that it was very hot. "Yes," said Joe; "if it wasn't for one thing I should say we were going to have a thaw." "What is that?" inquired the friend. "There's nothing froze," said Joe.

YEOMANRY DRILL.

Drill-Sergeant: "Dress up, Mr. Bumpus! You must dress up."

Mr. Bumpus (indignant): "Dress up! Confound you! I'm better dressed than you are."—Punch.

FORCE OF EXAMPLE.—A young lady who was recently seen helping her mamma do the housework had several offers of marriage right off. Since then all the young ladies in the neighbourhood, whenever they see a young man about, begin to assist their mammas in a similar manner.

PRUDENCE AND FORESIGHT.

"Why do you put your dolls by so carefully, Maggie?"

"I am keeping them for my children."

"But suppose you don't have any children?"

"Then they will do for my grandchildren!"—Punch.

"FIAT EXPERIMENTUM IN," ETC., ETC.

The Rector: "Good morning, Mrs. Smithers. How's the baby? Isn't it rather early to bring him to church? Don't you think he'll be restless?"

Mrs. Smithers: "Oh, no, sir, he'll be quiet, sir,

which we took him to the Methodist chapel last Sunday o' purpose to try him, sir!"—Punch.

DISH OR DRESS.—In a column of Times advertisements the other day was announced "Le Paletôt Chaud." The advertisements on inspection proved to bear the name of tailors, which corrected the impression, produced at first sight, that "Le Paletôt Chaud" meant something for dinner.—Punch.

AMICABLE ARRANGEMENT.—The other day a couple of nice young men differed on a certain question, when it was deemed expedient to settle the matter by taking the "eyes and nose." Friends interposed, and soon after the twain appeared before a "bruise mender," who gave it as his opinion that the "eyes had it"—the worst.

A GOOD ANSWER.—Some years ago, as a certain well-known old clergyman was walking out one summer afternoon, two young beaux took it into their heads to break a jest upon the old parson. Walking briskly up to him, they asked him if he could tell them the colour of Satan's wig. The worthy clergyman, surveying them attentively for a few seconds, made the following reply: "Truly, here is a most surprising case—two men have served a master all the days of their life, and can't tell the colour of his wig!"

UNPLEASANT REMINDER.—Happy Bridgroom: "More money, madam! more money! Have you forgotten that 'my' money has bought everything you possess—the very dress you stand in?" Happy Bride: "No, sir! Nor have I forgotten that your money has bought what stands in it!"

PRIMEVAL WOMAN.—"Woman, lovely woman," said Brown. "What is the world without woman? Yes, if there were no women in the world we should all be miserable. They are the primeval cause of all our happiness." "No doubt," put in the cynic, Robinson, "they are prime evil themselves."

NOT TO MOVE A PEG.—A gentleman in Essex a few days since purchased a pair of shoes for his boy. The shoe-dealer took the shoes for the purpose of rasping off the pegs inside, when the purchaser objected. "Because," said he, "if the pegs are cut off the boy runs all over the town, and the shoes will not last him three weeks."

HEREDITARY TRAITS.—A lady, in a philosophical mood, asked a male friend how it happened that boys got all their bad traits from their fathers. "I don't know," was the reply; "but perhaps it would help us to answer if we could find out where the girls get their blemishes from." "Oh," replied the fair metaphysician, "they all come from their grandfathers!"

A LONG SPELL.—A Birmingham paper announces that it has received a subscription for the Newcastle engineers from "Oso who has worked twelve hours a day at a vice." This reveals a sad state of immorality. In such a case any reduction of the hours of labour would clearly be an improvement. We respectfully draw Lord Shaftesbury's attention to this startling disclosure.—Punch.

INTELLIGENT JURY.—At an inquest held the other day at the "College Arms," Camden Town, on the body of an infant whose death had resulted from the effects of small-pox, the jury returned a verdict of "Death by small-pox, accelerated by neglect of vaccination." Accelerated—good word. Of course, neglected vaccination hastened death. If vaccination had been performed, the patient would not have died so soon.—Punch.

ECONOMY AND EXTRAVAGANCE.—The calculating machine invented by Mr. Babbage was long ago left unfinished for want of pecuniary help from Government. To secure the completion of that marvellous instrument how small a proportion of the money would have sufficed which, since the progress of the calculating machine's construction was stopped, has been squandered through Admiralty mismanagement!—Punch.

ALMOST A SUFFICIENT REASON.

Angelina: "Sarah! Have any of those mischievous children been playing with the piano while I have been out of town? Some of the keys won't sound at all."

Sarah: "Please, mum, I don't know nothink about it—lastways, Master Tom said there was some think wrong with it, which he was sure there was a mouse in it, so he got Joe to hold up the cover, while he put the dorg and cat in; but instead of catchin' the mouse, mum, they took to fighin', and did make such a funny noise in among them wires—so, maybe, mum, the mouse is in there still, mum."—Fun.

SHORT THEME.—Great are the marvels of electricity, wonderful are the triumphs of telegraphy! The magic wire that encircles the globe, that stretches beneath the sea, that crowns the lofty summit and spans the airy void, carrying its chequered messages to every home and every clime, and influencing the destinies of empires and the price of stocks in a single instant of time, has achieved another victory over the Impossible, has borne

a golden burden across the wild sea waters—"10,000," was remitted to New York on Wednesday by Atlantic Cable." Who now can doubt that this generation, or at the latest the next, will travel by telegraph?—Punch.

CREATURES OF IMPULSE.—The instinct which drives the moth and the daddy-longlegs to fly into the light of a candle is perhaps an impulse engendered in such insects under a natural law tending to make them limit their own numbers. Does a similar impulse actuate the crowds of people who always rush frantically to the scene of a fire, and necessitate, from a humane point of view, the exertions of the police to keep them off the flames?—Punch.

"NAB WONDER ABOUT IT."—A constable, a native of Scotland, was brought before a justice in the upper part of the city, and convicted of having appropriated to his own use a sum of money which, in the discharge of his official duty, he had recovered for a creditor. The worthy magistrate, in the course of administering a reproof to the delinquent, remarked that "it was singular they could not get honest men to transact the business of the court;" to which the noways abashed offender made this brief but forcible reply: "There's na wonder about it, sir, for nae honest man wad do't."

SALES OF THE PRINCE IMPERIAL'S EFFECTS.—The Prince Imperial's toys and school-room belongings have been all disposed of. It was hardly fair to bring his effects to the hammer. Many valuable objects presented to him during the sunshine of his sire's prosperity were sold. This seems very like a leaf out of Prussia's book and looting. There is no reason for taking the boy's private property. A velocipede, very elegantly constructed, and with silver mounting, said to have been the one presented to the Prince Imperial by Alphonse, of Spain, was bought by a wealthy petroleum merchant from Oil City. This purchaser intends to place the velocipede under a glass case upon his drawing-room chimney-piece as a "reminder to his sons that richer men than he-strikers can bust up."

EGGS.

An individual is told of as doing business in one of our markets who is down on customers who don't speak properly.

"What's eggs this morning?" says a customer.

"Eggs, of course," says the dealer.

"I mean, how do they go?"

"Go where?"

"Sho—" says the customer, getting up his fury. "What for eggs?"

"Money! money, sir! or good endorsed credit," says the dealer.

"Don't you understand the English language, sir?" says the customer.

"Not as you mix and mingle it, I don't," responded the egg merchant.

"What is—the price—per—dozen—for—your—eggs?"

"Ah! now you talk," says the dealer; "eight pence per dozen is the price, sir."

"WAITING FOR THE VERDICT."—The Tichborne infiction recommences forthwith. Mr. Punch invites the attention of the Lord Chief Justice, and the rest of the universe, to the fact that he, Mr. Punch, though bound by no law but that of his own righteous will, has complied with judicial suggestion, and has abstained, during the recess, from all Tichbornism. Not so have sundry persons acted. Country journals have been studded with little paragraphs designed to keep up an interest in "the Claimant," whose movements have been recorded as carefully as if he had been already declared a member of the fashionable world of which he aspires to become the grace and ornament, and in which he can display all his admitted virtues. Yet hath Mr. Punch been silent. If Chief Justice Bovill has not a polite word for him, in return, Astrea may retain her place on the British Bench, but all the gentler morals, such as play thro' life's more tutored walks and charm the way, they, far dispersed on timorous pinions fly, or, not to put too fine a point on the matter—have hooked it.—Punch.

PANIC IN TRADE.—According to separate advertisements the trading classes are at present enjoying two several panics. They feel "great alarm" at the increase of the Co-operative Store system. They are hugely terrified at something that is to be done in the next International Exhibition. Anything for a sensation in these dull times. We expect a whole peal of similar alarm-bells. The tradesmen will next, perhaps, be frightened at the progress of the mean custom of checking accounts, and correcting the addition. Then they will be dismayed at the base practice of asking the price of articles before buying them. Afterwards they will announce their trepidation at the paltry conduct of those who offer less than the amount demanded. Again, they will be agitated at the dishonesty of persons who look at things in shop windows, yet do not go in and buy. Nextly, they will quiver with mingled

for and rage at folks who tear up circulars and puffing post cards without reading them. In fact, it is so evident that in the mind of the trading classes the Whole Duty of Man—and Woman—the final cause of society—is the buying everything at vendors' prices for ready money and without discount, that we may be prepared for any quantity of indignation against folks who buy only what they want, and try to get it as cheaply as they can. Why not get up an Anti-Economy League, and make it penal in people not to spend more than they can afford?—Punch.

SHOOT SO LONG AS IT VAS.

During a recent trial before Justice Dougherty it was thought important by counsel to determine the length of time that certain "two quarters of beef" remained in a cart in front of plaintiff's shop before they were taken away by the defendant. The witness under examination was a German, whose knowledge of the English language was very limited; but he testified in a very plain, straightforward way to having afterwards carried it out and put it into said cart.

Then the following ensued:

Counsel: "State to the jury how long it was after you took the meat from the shop and put it into the cart before it was taken away?"

Witness: "Now I shoot and tell dat. I dinks 'bout twelve vest. I not say nearer as dat."

Counsel: "You don't understand me. How long was it from the time the meat left the shop and was put into the cart before it was taken away by the defendant?"

Witness: "Now I know not what you ask dat for. Der cart he vas back up mit der pavement, and dat's shoot so long as it vas. You tell me how long der pavements vas. Den feet? Twelve feet? Den I tells you how long it vas."

Counsel: "I don't want to find out how long the pavement was, but I want to know" (speaking very slowly) "how long—this—meat—was—in—the—cart—before—it—was—taken—away?"

Witness: "Oh, dat! Well, now, I not sold any meat so. I all time weigh him; never measured meat, not yet. But I dinks 'bout dree feet." (Here the spectators and his honour and the jury smiled audibly.) "I know not, shentlemen, how is dis, I tell you all I can, so good as I know."

Counsel: "Look here, I want to know how long it was before the meat was taken away after it was put into the cart?"

Witness (looking very knowingly at counsel): "Now you try and get me in scrape. Dat meat was shoot so long in der cart as he vas in der shop. Dat's all I told you. Dat meat was dead meat. He don't get much longer in den dousen' year, not mooch."

Counsel: "That will do."

DADDY'S BOY.

In a certain town lived a man who made horse training a business. He bought up horses for market, and was considered pretty good at a bargain.

One day a long, lean, queer, green-looking specimen arrived with a quantity of horses. He inquired for the horse jockey.

"Daddy sent me down with some horses to sell," he said, in a half-idiotic tone.

"Who's he?"

"Daddy."

"What do you want for your horses?" said the jockey.

"Daddy said you could set your price," was the response.

"Let me have a look at your horses," said Brown.

Brown examined the horses, and fixed the price he would give for this and that, and the country bumpkin made no objection, although some of the offers were not more than one-half of the real price of the animal.

One of the bystanders gently suggested that he was being cheated, but he returned:

"Daddy said Brown would set the price himself."

So Brown had it all his own way.

At last they came to another animal, which did not look much superior to the rest.

"I must have more for that animal," said the fellow. "Daddy says he can run."

"Run!" said Brown; "that nag can't run."

"Daddy said so, and Daddy knows."

"Why, I've got one up at the stable that would beat it all hollow," said Brown.

"I think not," said the fellow. "Let's try 'em. I'll bet the whole lot of horses on 'em."

Brown smiled.

"I'll stake one hundred pounds against your lot of horses," said Brown, winking to the crowd; "and these men," selecting two, "shall hold the stakes."

Brown's hundred was handed over.

One of the crowd started to remonstrate with the poor, idiotic fellow, but he only responded:

"Dad told me he could run, and Daddy ought to

lose 'em if he was so stupid as to tell me that when he couldn't."

Brown's sleek racer was brought out, and Brown mounted him.

The countryman led out his animal and climbed on his back, looking as uncouth and awkward as the horse he proposed to ride.

The word was given, and they started amidst the laughter of the crowd.

At the commencement Brown was ahead, and it looked as though the poor fellow was to be badly beaten, when suddenly his horse plunged forward, and the horse jockey was left far behind.

Such going had not been seen in those parts for a long time, and poor Brown was crestfallen as the cheers of the bystanders fell on his ears.

"I'll take the coin," said the countryman, riding up. "Dad was correct. The animal can get round a little."

Brown tried to say that it was a joke, but the fellow would have his money.

"I think I won't sell to-day," said he as he put it in his old, rough, leather pocket-book. "I will go back to Daddy."

Brown was completely "sold," for he knew at once that the countryman was a little shrewder than people imagined him, and had just come there to win his money from him.

Next time he did not ridicule a horse that "Daddy said could run."

KINDLY WORDS.

WHEN kindly words fall on the ear
Our present troubles disappear,
And blissful hours at once are ours,
Though grief and care our spirit sours;
The aching heart forgets its grief,
And finds in instant joy relief
From ills to which our flesh is heir,
Dark days of sorrow and despair.

When kindly words fall on the ear
They do at once our spirits cheer,
Bring back the pleasant smile and look
That for a while the face forsook,
When cares weigh heavy on the soul,
And days of darkness on us roll,
Which makes our journey to the tomb
Seem ever one of doubt and gloom.

When kindly words fall on the ear
As if by magic reappear
Life's brightest, fairest hours again;
And, mindful not of present pain,
We taste anew the sweets of life,
Though earthly ills with us be rife,
And drink at pleasure's fount the joy
An angry word would quick destroy.

If these so much kind words will do,
Let all of us speak kindly to
The poor, and all who suffer here,
Their sad and gloomy life to cheer;
That they are brighter, one may know,
As through this trying world they go,
Knowing far more of bliss than care
While in this world of dark despair.

W. H. D.

GEMS.

WHAT a difference between mere civilities and acts of real friendship; how easy to obtain the former, and at times how hard to get the latter!

OBSERVE the order in which Providence sends you mercies. See how one is linked strangely to another, and is a door to let in many. Sometimes one mercy is introductive to a thousand.

THE pleasures of the world are deceitful; they promise more than they give. They trouble us in seeking them, they do not satisfy us when possessing them, and they make us despair in losing them.

THE acquisition of knowledge is in itself a positive good; the man who has his mind open to the perception of surrounding objects, and is led to inquire into and reflect on their nature and properties, has much greater capabilities of happiness—has much greater chance of understanding and fulfilling the duties of his station, than if brought up in gross ignorance, without ever having exercised his intellectual powers.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

REMEDY FOR THE DROPSY.—Digitalin, 1 grain; acetate of potash, 1 oz.; Holland gin, 4 oz.; syrup enough to make the mixture measure one pint. Dissolve the digitalin in a little alcohol, and add it to the gin; then dissolve the acetate of potash in water, and add the two mixtures together, and add the syrup till

a pint is obtained. The dose is one teaspoonful taken three or four times during the day.

BLACK LUSTRE COLOUR.—Dr. Klemeyer gives a recipe which is adapted for either paper, cloth, or porous wood: He states that it stands well, is very supple, and has no tendency to get sticky. To prepare it he boils together 8 pounds of glue, previously dissolved in 16 pounds of water; 1 pound of potato starch, dissolved in 5½ pounds of water; 5½ pounds of campeachy, extract of 6 eggs. Baume; 1 pound 2 ounces of green vitriol, and 8½ pounds of brown glycerine. When thoroughly mixed he removes the pot from the fire, and continues to stir until the liquid is cold. If the paint be desired thicker or thinner the amount of starch and glue must be varied as well as the other materials, or the lustre will suffer.

STATISTICS.

DIPLOMATIC SALARIES.—It appears from an official return just published at Berlin that the salaries of the German representatives at the principal European Courts are much lower than those of the representatives of other Powers. Thus, in London the German Ambassador gets 32,000 thalers (4,800*l.*) a year; the French Ambassador, 80,000 thalers; the Russian, 63,500 thalers; the Austrian, 52,000; and the Turkish, 38,000. In Paris the German representative also receives 32,000 thalers a year; the English, 74,773 thalers; the Russian, 56,000 thalers; the Austrian, 56,800; the Turkish, 37,600; and the Italian, 36,900 thalers. At Vienna the salary of the German Ambassador is 30,000 thalers, including 5,000 for house rent; that of the British Ambassador, 61,333 thalers; of the Russian, 35,600 thalers; of the French, 53,333 thalers; of the Turkish, 56,666 thalers. At St. Petersburg the German Ambassador gets 40,000 thalers, including 8,000 for house rent; the English, 61,333; the French, 80,000 thalers; and the Austrian, 38,000. At Brussels the salary of the German representative is 13,000 thalers; of the English, 26,666 thalers; of the Russian, 30,000 thalers; and of the French, 21,333 thalers. Thus each of the principal capitals the salary of the British Ambassador is double that of the German.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Field-Marshal Sir George Pollock will succeed the late Sir John Burgoyne as Constable of the Tower.

The 1st of May next is the day fixed for the opening of the new Alexandra Palace at Muswell Hill.

The Prince of Wales has received the Order of the Southern Cross from the Emperor of Brazil.

M. THIERS has imposed a tax of three francs on cats.

HER Majesty the Queen has contributed 500*l.* to the Chicago Relief Fund.

We hear that it is likely Lady Burgoyne will receive from Her Majesty a suite in Hampton Court Palace.

The entire Strand, and a portion of the thoroughfare east of Temple Bar, are to be paved immediately with Val de Travers asphalt.

BLACK AND CASPIAN SEAS' CANAL.—Another canal project is on foot. The latest is for uniting the Black and Caspian Seas by a canal, according to the plan of Captain Blum, and is engaging the attention of the Russian Government; the cost is estimated at 81,000,000 roubles.

THE French Commissioners for the International Exhibition held this year at Kensington have just sent in their report to the Minister of Commerce. The sales of articles in the department allotted to France amounted to more than 500,000*l.* (30,000*l.*). Orders had also been received for double that sum. For works of art more than 125,000*l.* had been received.

PRINCE GUSTAF OF SWEDEN.—Prince Gustaf of Sweden, eldest son of Prince Oscar, and heir-apparent to the throne, who has continued to suffer since the spring from an injury to the knee, caused by a fall, is about to leave Sweden to undergo a cure in the milder climate of the Rhine at New Weid. His Royal Highness proposes remaining with his aunt, the Princess of Weid, until next spring.

DEATH OF A TRAFALGAR OFFICER.—Admiral Alfred Luckraft, who died at Portsmouth a few days since in his eightieth year, embarked in the "Monarch," 74, in January, 1801, his name having been borne on the books of that ship since January 25th, 1799. He was present in the action off Copenhagen April 2nd following; was midshipman of the "Mars," and wounded at Trafalgar, and at the capture of the "Rhin" and four other French frigates in 1806. He was senior lieutenant of the "Blonde" at the reduction of Morea Castle in 1826; was made commander in 1829, and after serving off Lisbon, and again in the Mediterranean, was posted in 1838. He became rear-admiral in 1857, vice-admiral 1864, and admiral 1869.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A. T. T.—Thanks for your communication.
 A. W.'s response must be better authenticated.
 L. P. B.—The manuscript is declined with thanks.
 OLDHAM.—There is not such a book in any catalogue or library to which we have access.
 SNOWDROP and LILY.—There has not at present arrived for you any satisfactory communication.
 MR. P. C. Clerkwell.—The writer has evidently made a mistake.
 V. M.—Your letter is so vague and indefinite that a compliance with your request is impossible.
 B. A. E.—We can only regret that such an extraordinary occurrence has produced such an extraordinary result.

BANDMASTER.—You should write a note to the commissioners, and transmit to them at their office, South Kensington.

R. S. B.—In consequence of other engagements having been made, we are sorry to say that your request cannot be complied with.

ALBERT.—Although you have written a great many words, you have entirely omitted everything approaching to a description of your personal appearance.

NOT JUSTICE.—The matter can be compromised for a consideration fairly paid. The terms and release should not be concluded except under professional advice.

THE HERO OF FLODDEN, notwithstanding his high-sounding description, cannot yet have won his spurs, and should remember that a lady in looking for a husband thinks of something more than a name.

M. N.—The handwriting is very good. The defects in the composition are that the sentence is much too long, and that in one instance you have used the adjective instead of the adverb.

GRONER M.—The precise time of day is not material. You should, however, choose a time which under the circumstances is reasonable, and as the morning is the best time for business may not give it then?

WATERFORD.—The only hope of alleviating your disorder lies in the adoption of a steady, temperate mode of life. Fresh air, moderate exercise, wholesome food, and early hours are your best friends.

G. F.—Read aloud each day slowly and with patience, exerting your will to remedy the defect. There is much difficulty in eradicating the habit, which is the offspring of an infirmity of temper coupled with some weakness of the nervous system.

R. S.—The observations which we have previously made on many of your former attempts are so nearly applicable to your "Scenes and Sentiments in Cornubia," that we can spare you the trouble of reading what in effect would be a repetition of our former opinion.

C. A.—A lady does not attain her majority any earlier than a gentleman—that is, until twenty-one years have elapsed from the date of birth. The age at which, with the consent of parents, individuals may marry, is twelve in girls and fourteen in boys.

PAULEY-VOUS.—We think that the young lady has acted very wisely, and admire her discretion. As to the advisability of your bringing an action against her, that is a matter for your solicitor to determine after a due consideration of the proofs you can place in his hands.

A. M. B. and OTHERS.—Our correspondents should not mingle their requests for information on general subjects with their wishes concerning marriage. The letter containing the particulars which refer to their matrimonial views should allude to no other subject. When other questions are asked they should be submitted in a separate letter.

HARRIET L.—1. If there is any rule in the matter it is just the converse of that you have stated. Married ladies usually take a gentleman's left arm, single ladies his right; that is of course when folk walk arm in arm, a proceeding which is somewhat out of fashion. 2. The 11th January, 1854, fell on a Wednesday; the 1st June, 1856, on a Sunday.

LILY.—It is only necessary that one of the parties should reside in the district in which the marriage is solemnized for fifteen days previous to such solemnization. Therefore when your intended husband reaches your native town with the proper licence in his pocket you can be married as soon after his arrival as the necessary arrangements can be made.

F. C. S.—1. A decent simple wedding need not cost more than five pounds. 2. The whole of the expenses should be paid by the bridegroom. 3. As a rule the middle class prefer to be married at church after banns

have been published; this is an inexpensive method. Marriage at the registrar's office is quite the exception. 4. Nothing beyond the customary wedding presents from the members of the bride's family.

MARIE S.—Considering that according to your own showing at least six years must elapse before one of the events to which you allude can happen, it must be granted that your announcement is premature. Prudence counsels you to defer such views for the present, and to devote your energies towards the perfection of those accomplishments in which you have already made such great progress.

G. A. S.—There are not perhaps many faults in the versification, but your ode is defective because of the method in which you have treated the subject. In effect you sigh and pray and rejoice for three very different things to which you have chosen to affix the same name. Thus your lines are marked by a weakness and unreality by which they become divested of all interest.

F. J. A.—We cannot speak in terms of unreserved commendation concerning your verses "Good Bye." They contain some small errors which you might have easily corrected, and whatever interest they possess would seem to attach more to your own circle than to the world generally. On the other hand, they bear marks of cultivation and good ability. They deserve praise, and encouragement should only be withheld in order to dissuade you from treading a path which though strewn with flowers yields their sweetness but nothing more.

A SOLDIER'S SISTER.—1. No, the allotted time must be served. 2. The handwriting is firm, distinct, stylish, and good. 3. Let the fruit be peeled, cut into slices, and put into a clean stew-pan, with (to each pound of fruit) a pound of sugar, half a pint of water, and the juice of one lemon. When the mixture boils skim it well. Stir well during the boiling, which should be continued for a quarter of an hour, after which the jam should be poured into small white pots. Then cut white papers to the size of the top of the pots, dip the papers in brandy and place them over the jam when it has become cold, and finally tie a double paper each pot.

GOOD-BYE, BUT COME AGAIN.

Oh! must we part? How sad the words

Are falling on my heart!

Your beaming eyes would bid me stay;

But, dear one, we must part.

And yet the words of hope you breathe

Have borne away my pain:

I bless the lips that sweetly say,

"Good-bye, but come again."

What bliss to hold your hand in mine,

And gaze into your eyes!

What bliss to know one heart is true

'Neath fair or cloudy skies!

Your cheering words like summer flowers

Shall in my heart remain:

I'll ever bless those lips that say,

"Good-bye, but come again." A. D.

LIZIE E., tall, good figure, and musical, wishes to marry a young man with good prospects.

JOLLY BOAT, thirty-five, 5ft. 9in., fair, a mate in the merchant service, and good tempered. Respondent must be about the same age, fair, and ladylike.

AMY, eighteen, medium height, dark, nice eyes, and of a lively disposition, wishes to marry a tall, fair young man about twenty-one, of a loving disposition.

LOVELY BUTTERFLY, twenty-three, medium height, very pretty, wishes to marry a young man who has some means.

GIPSY QUEEN, twenty-five, 5ft. 6in., good figure, wishes to marry a tall farmer of thirty. She would make him an industrious, loving wife.

HOMERLY NORA, thirty-five, of good family, and possessed of some means, wishes to marry a farmer of just the same age and some means.

NELLIE S., nineteen, short, good tempered, light brown hair, gray eyes, and domesticated. Respondent must be a carpenter with dark hair and eyes.

VULCAN, twenty-one, 5ft. 6in., an iron-worker, hazel eyes, light moustache, dark complexion. Respondent must be fair and industrious.

NELLY, eighteen, medium height, stout built, dark hair, hazel eyes, amiable, and domesticated. Respondent to be tall, loving, and fond of home.

STANDING COMPASS, twenty-one, 5ft. 5in., light hair, blue eyes, good looking, and much tempered, wishes to marry a fair young lady who is industrious and loving.

SELINA, seventeen, medium height, dark hair and eyes, loving and good tempered. Respondent must be about twenty-one, tall, and fair.

ROBERT, twenty-one, 5ft. 9in., dark, a tradesman with good expectations. Respondent must be in Scotland, about eighteen, handsome, and loving.

E. S., twenty-two, medium height, auburn hair, fair complexion, amiable disposition, would like to marry some one who could make her a comfortable home.

DORCAS, a widow, thirty-six, medium height, dark hair and eyes, loving, has two children, and a comfortable home. Respondent must be a widower, kind and industrious.

AN ENGLISH GIRL, twenty-eight, tall, dark hair and eyes, and domesticated, would like to marry a steady, industrious, and affectionate mechanic who is fond of home.

LIZIE, eighteen, medium height, dark brown hair, bluish gray eyes, affectionate, industrious, and domesticated. Respondent must have a true, loving heart, be amiable, tall, and about twenty-four.

FAIR NELLIE would like to marry a steady young man who is respectable, dark, and good looking. "Nellie" is twenty, rather tall, has brown hair and blue eyes, and thinks she could make a young man happy.

DROOPING LILY and BLUSH ROSE—"Drooping Lily," nineteen, tall, black hair, dark eyes, clear complexion, and good looking. "Blush Rose," eighteen, dark brown

hair, dark blue eyes, clear complexion, and loving. Respondents must be tall, dark, and loving.

ROYAL TRUCE, nineteen, 5ft. 4in., dark hair and eyes, fair complexion, and fairly educated, wishes to marry a young lady about eighteen, who is dark, fond of home and music, and able to love a sailor.

DAISY, twenty, 5ft., chestnut brown hair, hazel eyes, fair complexion, loving, and fond of home. Respondent must be about twenty-five, tall, and very dark; a mechanic preferred.

ALICE, nineteen, 5ft. 5in., golden hair, bright blue eyes, fair complexion, domesticated, and would make a good wife. Respondent must be tall and fair; a tradesman preferred.

NELLIE, seventeen, 5ft. 8in., light brown hair, hazel eyes, fair complexion, and fond of music. Respondent must be fair, about twenty, tall and loving; a clerk in a banking-house preferred.

BLANCHER, twenty, 5ft. 4in., a brunette, black eyes, olive complexion, domesticated, and cheerful. Respondent must be about twenty-six, tall, have dark curly hair, hold a good situation, and be fond of home.

LEOPOLD, 5ft. 9in., a cabinet-maker, would like to marry a domesticated young woman about twenty-five. "Leopold" is fair and of sober habits. Respondent should also be fair, and good looks are desirable.

BLUSH ROSE, seventeen, 5ft. 3in., gray eyes, golden hair, fair complexion, graceful figure, accomplished, and loving. Respondent should be dark, tall, handsome, musical, and kind, who would give heart and love in return for the same.

JULIA, twenty, 5ft. 1in., fair complexion, gray eyes, curly auburn hair, good tempered, and domesticated, would like to marry a young man about twenty-three; she is not particular about height or complexion, but he must be fond of home.

LOUISA and EMMA—"Louisa," nineteen, medium height, brown hair and eyes, good tempered, lively, and domesticated. "Emma," twenty-one, tall, brown hair, blue eyes, fond of home and loving. Respondents should be fair, fond of home, loving, and have a good salary.

EDWARD, twenty-one, 5ft. 7in., brown hair, blue eyes, loving, and steady. Respondent must be respectfully connected, medium height, fair complexion, have brown hair and dark eyebrows; she must also be educated, cheerful, and loving.

OLIVE and ROSABELL (sisters).—"Olive," twenty-one, dark hair and eyes, good looking, educated, used to housekeeping, good tempered, and lively. Respondent would not be considered too old at thirty or thirty-five. "Rosabel," seventeen, light brown hair, gray eyes, fair complexion, would make a young farmer a nice, loving wife; fond of riding and driving, loves hunting and other outdoor amusements, well educated. Hopes to find a respondent.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

SUSANNAH is responded to by—"Edwin," twenty-three, 5ft. 6in., a steady mechanic in constant work, and a great lover of home comforts.

ROSE by—"Norman," thirty, tall, fair, of good position, refined manners, and fond of poetry and painting. W. W. W. by—"Emma," twenty-six, fair hair, loving, and domesticated.

ELLIOT by—"Annie," twenty, tall, dark complexion, loving, and fond of home.

LILLY by—"A. H.," twenty-one, 5ft. 9in., blue eyes, dark hair, very loving, and fond of home.

W. P. by—"Saucy Kate," eighteen, medium height, dark complexion.

EVANGELINE by—"F. N. F.," twenty-one, 5ft. 11in., dark, well educated, and in a good situation.

EVA by—"J. P. C.," who is in business for himself, and has dark curly hair and blue eyes.

E. A. B. by—"D. T.," forty-six, 6ft., a widower without children, has a small income in addition to his earnings.

A. B. C. by—"Eulalie," twenty-two, medium height, dark hair and eyes, loving, domesticated, and fond of home.

BARRABA by—"Harold," twenty-one, average height, fair, good figure, accomplished, in a first-class situation, active, energetic, and prudent.

ELIOT by—"Flora," twenty, medium height, dark hair, hazel eyes, loving, domesticated, plays the piano, would make a good wife to a fond and true husband; and by—"Nellie Bligh," nineteen, medium height, has a clear skin, very dark hair and eyes, is stout, amiable, domesticated, and loving.

A WIDOW AGED FORTY must first send a personal description of herself.

ROSE-CHEEKED EMILY wishes to hear from "Willie S.," and to receive particulars of his position in life.

REJECTED COMMUNICATIONS.—The following cannot be inserted:—"Fanny H.," "Ettie M.," "T. I. C.," "J. T.," "Amy C.," and "Malvina B."

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